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UCLA

THE

TRIUMPHS OF TEMPER;

A

POEM:

IN SIX CANTOS.

BY

WILLIAM HAYLEY, Esq.

O voi ch' avete gl' intelletti ſani
Mirate la dottrina, che ſi aſconde
Sotto' il velame degli verſi ſtrani.

DANTE, Inferno, Canto 9.

THE SIXTH EDITION, CORRECTED.

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PREFACE.

IT ſeems to be a kind of duty incumbent on thoſe who devote themſelves to poetry, to raiſe, if poſſible, the dignity of a declining art, by making it as beneficial to life and manners as the limits of compoſition, and the character of modern times, will allow. The ages, indeed, are paſt, in which the ſong of the poet was idolized for its miraculous effects; *yet a poem, intended to promote the cultivation of good-humour, may ſtill perhaps be fortunate enough to prove of ſome little ſervice to ſociety in general; or, if this idea may be thought too chimerical and romantic by ſober reaſon, it is at leaſt one of thoſe pleaſing and innocent deluſions, in which a poetical enthuſiaſt may be ſafely indulged.*

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The following production owes its exiſtence to an incident in real life, very ſimilar to the principal action of the laſt canto; but in forming the general plan of the work, it ſeemed to me abſolutely neceſſary to introduce both the agency and the abode of SPLEEN, *notwithſtanding the difficulty and the hazard of attempting a ſubject ſo happily executed by the maſterly pencil of Pope. I conſidered his Cave of Spleen as a moſt exquiſite cabinet picture; and, to avoid the ſervility of imitation, I determined to ſketch the manſion of this gloomy power on a much wider canvaſs: happy, indeed, if the judgment of the public may enable me to exclaim, with the honeſt vanity of the painter, who compared his own works to the divine productions of Raphael,*

"E ſon pittore anch' Io!"

The celebrated Aleſſandro Taſſoni, who is generally conſidered as the inventor of the modern Heroi-

comic

comic poetry, was ſo proud of having extended the limits of his art by a new kind of compoſition, that he not only ſpoke of it with infinite exultation in one of his private letters, but even gave a MS. copy of his work to his native city of Modena, with an inſcription, in which he ſtiled it a new ſpecies of poetry, invented by himſelf.

A few partial friends have aſſerted, that the preſent performance has ſome degree of ſimilar merit; but as I apprehend all the novelty it poſſeſſes, may rather require an apology, than entitle its author to challenge commendation, I ſhall explain how far the conduct of the poem differs from the moſt approved models in this mode of writing, and ſlightly mention the poetical effects, which ſuch a variation appeared likely to produce.

It is well known, that the favourite poems, which blend the ſerious and the comic, repreſent

their principal characters in a ſatirical point of view: it was the intention of Taſſoni (though prudence made him attempt to conceal it) to ſatirize a particular Italian nobleman, who happened to be the object of his reſentment. Boileau openly ridicules the French eccleſiaſtics in his Lutrin; Garth, our Engliſh phyſicians, in his Diſpenſary; and the Rape of the Lock itſelf, that moſt excellent and enchanting poem, which I never contemplate but with new idolatry, is denominated the beſt ſatire extant, *by the learned Dr. Warton, in his very elegant and ingenious, but ſevere, Eſſay on Pope: a ſentence which ſeems to be confirmed by the poet himſelf, in his letter to Mrs. Fermor, where he ſays, "the character of Belinda, as it is now managed, reſembles you in nothing but in beauty." Though I think, that no compoſition can ſurpaſs, or perhaps ever equal this moſt happy effort of genius, as a ſportive ſatire, I imagined it might be poſſible to give a new character to this mixed ſpecies*

of

of poetry, and to render it by its object, though not in its execution, more noble than the moſt beautiful and refined ſatire can be. We have ſeen it carried to inimitable perfection, in the moſt delicate raillery on female foibles: — it remained to be tried, if it might not alſo aſpire to delineate the more engaging features of female excellence. The idea appeared to me worth the experiment; for, if it ſucceeded, it ſeemed to promiſe a double advantage; firſt, it would give an air of novelty to the poem; and, ſecondly, what I thought of much greater importance, it would render it more intereſting to the heart. On theſe principles, I have endeavoured to paint SERENA *as a moſt lovely, engaging, and accompliſhed character; yet I hope the colouring is ſo faithfully copied from* general nature, *that every man, who reads the poem, may be happy enough to know many fair ones, who reſemble my heroine.*

There

There is another point, in which I have alſo attempted to give this poem an air of novelty: I mean, the manner of connecting the real and the viſionary ſcenes, which compoſe it; by ſhifting theſe in alternate cantos, I hoped to make familiar incident and allegorical picture afford a ſtrong relief to each other, and keep the attention of the reader alive, by an appearance particularly diverſified. I wiſhed, indeed (but I fear moſt ineffectually) for powers to unite ſome touches of the ſportive wildneſs of Arioſto, and the more ſerious ſublime painting of Dante, with ſome portion of the enchanting elegance, the refined imagination, and the moral graces of Pope; and to do this, if poſſible, without violating thoſe rules of propriety, which Mr. Cambridge has illuſtrated, by example as well as precept, in the Scribleriad, and in his ſenſible preface to that elegant and learned poem.

I have

I have now very frankly informed my reader of the extent, *or rather the* extravagance *of my deſire; for I will not give it the ſerious name of* deſign: *They, whom an enlightened taſte has rendered thoroughly ſenſible how very difficult it muſt be to accompliſh ſuch an idea, will not only be the firſt to diſcern, but the moſt ready to pardon thoſe errors, into which ſo hazardous an attempt may perhaps have betrayed me. I had thoughts of introducing this performance to the public, by a diſſertation of conſiderable length on this ſpecies of poetry; but I forbear to indulge myſelf any farther in ſuch preliminary remarks, as the anxiety of authors is ſo apt to produce, from the reflection, that, however ingeniouſly written, they add little or nothing to the ſucceſs of a good poem, and are utterly inſufficient to prevent that neglect, or oblivion, which is the inevitable fate of a bad one.*

In

In diſmiſſing a work to my fair readers, which is intended principally for their peruſal, I ſhall only recommend it to their attention; and bid them farewell, in the words of the pleaſant and courteous Taſſoni—

" Vaglia il buon voler, s' altro non lice,
E chi la leggera, viva felice!"

EARTHAM,
Jan. 31, 1781.

THE

THE

TRIUMPHS OF TEMPER.

CANTO I.

THE mind's ſoft guardian, who, tho' yet unſung,
Inſpires with harmony the female tongue,
And gives, improving every tender grace,
The ſmile of angels to a mortal face;
Her powers I ſing; and ſcenes of mental ſtrife,
Which form the maiden for th' accompliſh'd wife;
Where the ſweet victor ſees, with ſparkling eyes,
Love her reward, and happineſs her prize.
Daughters of beauty, who the ſong inſpire,
To your enchanting notes attune my lyre!
And O! if haply your ſoft hearts may gain
Or uſe, or pleaſure from the motley ſtrain,

Tho' formal critics, with a ſurly frown,
Deny your artleſs bard the laurel crown,
He ſtill ſhall triumph, if ye deign to ſpread
Your ſweeter myrtle round his honour'd head.

In your bright circle young SERENA grew;
A lovelier nymph the pencil never drew;
For the fond Graces form'd her eaſy mien,
And heaven's ſoft azure in her eye was ſeen.
She ſeem'd a roſe-bud, when it firſt receives
The genial ſun in its expanding leaves:
For now ſhe enter'd thoſe important years,
When the full boſom ſwells with hopes and fears;
When conſcious nature prompts the ſecret ſigh,
And ſheds ſweet languor o'er the melting eye;
When nobler toys the female heart trepan,
And dolls rejected, yield their place to man.

Beneath a father's care SERENA grew;
The good SIR GILBERT, to his country true,
A faithful Whig, who, zealous for the ſtate,
In freedom's ſervice led the loud debate;

Yet

Yet every day, by tranſmutation rare,
Turn'd to a Tory in his elbow-chair,
And made his daughter pay, howe'er abſurd,
Paſſive obedience to his ſovereign word.

In his domeſtic ſway he borrow'd aid
From prim PENELOPE, an ancient maid,
His upright ſiſter, conſcious of her worth,
Who valued ſtill her beauty, and her birth;
Tho' from her birth no envied rank ſhe gain'd,
And of her beauty but the ghoſt remain'd;
A reſtleſs ghoſt! that with remembrance keen
Proclaim'd inceſſant what it once had been;
Delighted ſtill the ſteps of youth to haunt,
To watch the tender nymph, and warm gallant;
And, with an eye that petrified purſuit,
Hang like the dragon o'er th' Heſperian fruit.

Tho' ſtrictly guarded by this jealous power,
The mild SERENA no reſtraint could four:
Pure was her boſom, as the ſilver lake,
Ere riſing winds the ruffled water ſhake,

When the bright pageants of the morning ſky,
Acroſs th' expanſive mirror lightly fly,
By vernal gales in quick ſucceſſion driven,
While the clear glaſs reflects the ſmile of heaven.
In gay content a ſportive life ſhe led,
The child of Modeſty, by Virtue bred:
Her light companions Innocence and Eaſe:
Her hope was pleaſure, and her wiſh to pleaſe:
For this, to Faſhion early rites ſhe paid;
For this, to Venus ſecret vows ſhe made;
Nor held it ſin to caſt a private glance
O'er the dear pages of a new romance,
Eager in fiction's touching ſcenes to find
A field, to exerciſe her youthful mind:
The touching ſcenes new energy impreſt
On all the virtues of her feeling breaſt.
Sweet Evelina's faſcinating power
Had firſt beguil'd of ſleep her midnight hour:
Poſſeſt by ſympathy's enchanting ſway,
She read, unconſcious of the dawning day.

Stothard del. Sharp sculp.

London, Publish'd Sept.r 1.st 1787, by T. Cadell, Strand.

The Modern Anecdote was next convey'd
Beneath her pillow by her faithful maid.
The nymph, attentive as the brooding dove,
Por'd o'er the tender ſcenes of Franzel's love:
The ſinking taper now grew weak and pale;
SERENA ſigh'd, and dropt th' unfiniſh'd tale;
But, as warm clouds in vernal æther roll,
The ſoft ideas floated in her ſoul:
Free from ambitious pride, and envious care,
To love, and to be lov'd, was all her prayer:
While theſe fond thoughts her gentle mind poſſeſs'd,
Soft ſlumber ſettled on her ſnowy breaſt.

Scarce had her radiant eyes began to cloſe,
When to her view a friendly viſion roſe:
A fairy Phantom ſtruck her mental ſight,
Light as the goſſamer, as æther bright;
Array'd like Pallas was the pigmy form,
When the ſage Goddeſs ſtills the martial ſtorm.
Her caſque was amber, richly grac'd above
With down, collected from the callow dove:

Her burniſh'd breaſt-plate, of a deeper dye,
Was once the armour of a golden fly:
A lynx's eye her little ægis ſhone,
By fairy ſpells converted into ſtone,
And worn of old, as elfin poets ſing,
By Ægypt's lovely queen, a favourite ring:
Myſterious power was in the magic toy,
To turn the frowns of care to ſmiles of joy.
Her tiny lance, whoſe radiance ſtream'd afar,
Was one bright ſparkle from the bridal ſtar.
A filmy mantle round her figure play'd,
Fine as the texture, by Arachne laid
O'er ſome young plant, when glittering to the view
With many an orient pearl of morning dew.
The Phantom hover'd o'er the conſcious Fair
With ſuch a lively ſmile of tender care,
As on her elfin lord Titania caſt,
When firſt ſhe found his angry ſpell was paſt.
Round her rich locks SERENA chanc'd to tie
An ample ribband of cærulean dye:

High

High o'er her forehead roſe the graceful bow,
Whoſe arch commanded the ſweet ſcene below:
The hovering Spirit view'd the tempting ſpot,
And lightly perch'd on this unbending knot;
As the fair flutterer, of Pſyche's race,
Is ſeen to terminate her airy chace,
When, pleas'd at length her quivering wings to cloſe,
Fondly ſhe ſettles on the fragrant roſe.

Now in ſoft notes, more muſically clear
Than ever Fairy breath'd in mortal ear,
Theſe words the viſionary voice convey'd
To the charm'd ſpirit of the ſleeping maid:

"Thou darling of my care, whoſe ripen'd worth
Shall ſpread my empire o'er the ſmiling earth;
Whom Nature bleſt, forbidding modiſh Art
To cramp thy ſpirit, or contract thy heart;
Screen'd from thy thought, nor in thy viſions felt,
Long on thy opening mind I've fondly dwelt;
In childhood's ſorrows brought thee quick relief,
And dry'd thy April ſhowers of infant grief:

Taught thee to laugh at the malicious boy,
Who broke thy playthings with a barbarous joy,
To bear what ills the little female haunt,
The teſty nurſe, th' imperious governante,
And that tyrannic peſt, the prying maiden aunt.
Now ripening years a nobler ſcene ſupply ;
For life now opens on thy ſparkling eye :
Thy riſing boſom ſwells with juſt deſire
Rapture to feel, and rapture to inſpire :
Not the vain bliſs, the tranſitory joys,
That childiſh woman feels, in radiant toys ;
The coſtly diamond, or the lighter pearl,
The maſſive Nabob, or the tinſel Earl.
Thy heart demands, each meaner aim above,
Th' imperiſhable wealth of ſterling love ;
Thy wiſh, to pleaſe by ev'ry ſofter grace
Of elegance and eaſe, of form and face !
By lively fancy and by ſenſe refin'd,
The ſtronger magic of the cultur'd mind !
Thy pure ambition, and thy virtuous plan,
To fix the variable heart of man !

Short

Short is the worſhip paid at beauty's ſhrine;
But laſting love and happineſs are mine:
Mine, tho' the earth's miſtaken, blinded race
Deſpiſe my influence, and my name debaſe;
Nor breathe one vow to that ætherial friend,
On whom the colours of their life depend.
But to thy innocence I now diſplay
The myſtic marvels of my ſecret ſway;
And tell, in this thy fate-deciding hour,
My race, my name, my office, and my power.

Firſt, hear what wonders human forms contain!
And learn the texture of the female brain!
By Nature's care in curious order ſpread,
This living net is fram'd of tender thread;
Fine, as thy hand, ſome favour'd youth to grace,
Knits with nice art to form the mimic lace.
Within the center of this fretted dome,
Her ſecret tower, her heaven-conſtructed home,
Soft Senſibility, ſweet Beauty's ſoul!
Keeps her coy ſtate, and animates the whole,

Inviſible

Inviſible as Harmony, who ſprings,
Wak'd by young Zephyr, from Æolian ſtrings:
Her ſubtle power, more delicately fine,
Dwells in each thread, and lives in every line,
Whoſe quick vibrations, without end, impart
Pleaſure and pain to the reſponſive heart.
As Zephyr's breath the willing chord inſpires,
Whiſpering ſoft muſic to the trembling wires,
So with fond care I regulate, unſeen,
The ſofter movements of this nice machine;
TEMPER my earthly name, the nurſe of Love!
But call'd SOPHROSYNE in realms above!
When lovely Woman, perfect at her birth,
Bleſt with her early charms the wond'ring earth,
Her ſoul, in ſweet ſimplicity array'd,
Nor ſhar'd my guidance, nor requir'd my aid.
Her tender frame, nor confident nor coy,
Had every fibre tun'd to gentle joy:
No vain caprices ſwell'd her pouting lip;
No gold produc'd a mercenary trip;

Soft

Soft innocence inſpir'd her willing kiſs,
Her love was nature, and her life was bliſs.
Guide of his reaſon, not his paſſion's prey,
She tam'd the ſavage, Man, who bleſs'd her ſway.
No jarring wiſhes fill'd the world with woes,
But youth was ecſtacy, and age repoſe.

The Powers of Miſchief met, in dark Divan,
To blaſt theſe mighty joys of envied Man:
The Fiends, at their infernal leader's call,
Fram'd their baſe wiles in Demogorgon's hall.
In the deep center of that dreadful dome,
An helliſh cauldron boil'd with fiery foam:
In this wide urn the circling ſpirits threw
Ingredients harſh, and hideous to the view;
While the terrific maſter of the ſpell
With adjurations ſhook the depths of hell,
And in dark words, unmeet for mortal ear,
Bade the dire offspring of his art appear.
Forth from the vaſe, with ſullen murmurs, broke
A towering maſs of peſtilential ſmoke:

Emerging

Emerging from this fog of thickeſt night,
A Phantom ſwells, by ſlow degrees, to ſight;
But ere the view can ſeize the forming ſhape,
From the mock'd eye its lineaments eſcape:
It ſeem'd all paſſions melted into one,
Aſſum'd the face of all, and yet was none:
Hell ſtood aghaſt at its portentous mien,
And ſhuddering Demons call'd the ſpectre Spleen.
'Hie thee to earth!' its mighty maſter cried,
'O'er the vex'd globe in heavy vapours ride!
Within its center fix thy ſhadowy throne!
With ſhades thy ſubjects, and that hell thy own!
Reign there unſeen! but let thy ſtrong controul
Be hourly felt in Woman's wayward ſoul!
With darkeſt poiſons from our deep abyſs,
Taint that pure fountain of terreſtrial bliſs!'
Th' enormous Phantom, at this potent ſound,
Roll'd forth obedient from the vaſt profound:
The quaking Fiends recover'd from their dread,
And hell grew lighter, as the monſter fled.

But

Stothard del

Sharp sculp.t

London, Published Sept.r 1.st 1788. by T. Cadell. Strand.

But now round earth the gliding vapours run,
Blot the rich æther, and eclipſe the ſun;
All Nature ſickens; and her faireſt flower,
Enchanting Woman, feels the baneful Power:
As in her ſoul the clouds of Spleen ariſe,
The ſprightly eſſence of her beauty flies:
In youth's gay prime, in hours with rapture warm,
Love looks aſtoniſh'd on her altering form:
To pleaſing frolics, and enchanting wiles,
Life-darting looks, and ſoul-ſubduing ſmiles,
Dark whims ſucceed: thick-coming fancies fret;
The ſullen paſſion, and the haſty pet;
The ſwelling lip, the tear-diſtended eye,
The peeviſh queſtion, the perverſe reply;
The moody humour, that, like rain and fire,
Blends cold diſguſt with unſubdu'd deſire,
Flies what it loves, and, petulantly coy,
Feigns proud abhorrence of the proffer'd joy:
For Nature's artleſs aim, the wiſh to pleaſe
By genuine modeſty, and ſimple eaſe,

Faſhion's

Faſhion's pert tricks the crowded brain oppreſs
With all the poor parade of tawdry dreſs:
The ſickly boſom pants for noiſe and ſhow,
For every bauble, and for every beau;
The voice, that health made harmony, diſowns
That native charm for languor's mimic tones;
And feigns diſeaſe, till, feeling what it feigns,
Its fancied maladies are real pains.
Such, and a thouſand ſtill ſuperior woes,
From Spleen's new empire o'er the earth aroſe:
Each ſimple dictate of the ſoul forgot,
Then firſt was form'd the mercenary plot;
And beauty practis'd that pernicious art,
The art of angling for an old man's heart;
Tho' crawling to his bride with tottering knees,
His words were dotage, and his love diſeaſe.
From ſex to ſex this baſe contagion ran,
And gold grew beauty in the eyes of man:
Courtſhip was traffic: and the married life
But one loud jangle of inceſſant ſtrife.

The gentle Sprite, who, on his radiant car,
Shines the mild regent of the evening-ſtar,
And joys from thence thoſe genial rays to ſhed,
That lead the bridegroom to the nuptial bed,
While earth's new ills his friendly ſoul abſorb,
From Cynthia call'd me to his kindred orb;
And, eager to redreſs the woes of man,
The brilliant Son of Veſper thus began:
'Thou ſofteſt Being of th' ætherial kind,
Be thy benignant cares no more confin'd
To ſmooth the ruffled plume of Zephyr's wing,
To guard from cruel froſt the infant ſpring,
To drive groſs atoms from the rays of noon,
Or chaſe the halo from the vapouriſh moon!
Thy friendly nature will not now deny
To quit for nobler toils thy native ſky;
Thou ſeeſt how Spleen's infernal vapours roll
Acroſs the ſweet ſerene of woman's ſoul;
And earth, which darkens as her beauties fade,
Muſt grow a ſecond hell without thy aid:

Take then thy ſtation! fix thy nobler reign
O'er thoſe fine chords, that form the female brain,
That us'd, ere injur'd by the ruſt of Spleen,
To fill with harmony the human ſcene!
Go! leſt her touch their tender tones deſtroy,
Teach them to vibrate to thy notes of joy!
Go! and reſtore, by ſtilling mental ſtrife,
Health to faint love, and happineſs to life!'
So ſpake that friend of man, who lights above
His heavenly lamp of Hymenæal love:
In his juſt aim my kindred ſpirit join'd,
And flew obedient to the charge aſſign'd.
Hence, as the bias ſways th' unconſcious bowl,
I long unſeen have ſway'd the careleſs ſoul;
Tho' oft I feel my power by Spleen ſubdu'd,
In the ſhrill vixen, and the ſullen prude,
In ſome fair forms my ſoft dominion grows,
Like fragrance, riſing from the opening roſe:
Still I preſerve, in many a lovely face,
That gay good-humour, and that conſtant grace,

Which

Which heavenly Powers united to infold
In perfect Woman's new-created mould;
When Nature, in her infant beauty bleſt,
The laſt and lovelieſt of her works careſt.
But of thoſe nymphs, who, delicately fair,
Draw their ſoft graces from my forming care,
My young SERENA ſhines her peers above,
Pride of my hopes, and darling of my love.
Hence I to thee ſuch myſteries unfold,
As Man's pedantic eye ſhall ne'er behold;
Whoſe narrow ſcience, tho' it proudly boaſt
To pierce the ſky, and count the ſtarry hoſt,
Sees not the lucid band of airy Powers,
Who flutter round him in his ſecret hours:
But if to me, thy guardian now diſplay'd,
Thy duteous oriſons are juſtly paid,
Thou to thoſe realms ſhalt paſs with me thy guide,
Where Spleen's pale victims, after death, reſide;
Then to that orb, in viſion ſhalt thou riſe,
Unſeen by mortal aſtronomic eyes,

Where I—but firſt let me thy ſoul prepare
To meet our ſecret foe's inſidious ſnare!
'Tis my fond purpoſe in thy form to ſhow
The ſweeteſt model of my ſkill below:
A youth I deſtine to thy dear embrace,
Crown'd with each mental charm, and manly grace,
With whom thy innocence, ſecure from ſtrife,
Shall reap the beauteous joys of blameleſs life.
Pleas'd I obſerve thy little heart begin
To aſk, what charms the mighty prize may win:
But know, tho' Elegance herſelf be ſeen
To guide thy motion, and to form thy mien;
Tho' Beauty o'er thy filial cheek diffuſe
The ſoft enchantment of her roſeate hues,
Not from their favour ſhall this glory riſe!
TEMPER ſhall ſingly gain the ſplendid prize:
The ſudden conqueſt ſhall be mine alone,
And Love with tranſport ſhall my triumph own.
Such are my hopes; but I with pain relate
What hard conditions are annex'd by fate:

As

As chemic fires, that patient labour blows,
Draw the rich perfume from the Perſian roſe,
So muſt thou form, by fiery toils refin'd,
The living eſſence of thy ſweeter mind.
Dimly I ſee, on Deſtiny's dull glaſs,
Three dangerous trials 'tis thy doom to paſs;
And oh! if once forgetful of my power,
Good-humour fail thee in the fateful hour,
Farewell thoſe joys, that wait the happy wife!
Farewell the viſion of unclouded life!

Fain would my love thy ſecret perils ſhow,
Which fate allows not even me to know:
In Spleen's dark court a thouſand agents dwell,
Who bind her victims in the wayward ſpell;
Perchance three prime ſupporters of her ſway,
The buſieſt of her fiends, may croſs thy way:
Stern Contradiction, her ill-favour'd child,
Of fierce demeanor, and of ſpirit wild,
Bane of delight! and horror of the ſex!
His plan to puzzle, and his pride to vex!—

Or Scandal, filthy hag! who blindly limps
Round the wide earth, ſupported by her imps,
Her inky demons, who delight to print
Her baſe ſuggeſtion, and her envious hint:—
Or groundleſs Jealouſy, pert changeling! born
Of amorous Vanity, and angry Scorn,
Whoſe bitter taunts with public inſult dare
Baſely to wound the unoffending fair,
Proud the ſweet joys of innocence to cruſh,
And ſpread o'er beauty's cheek the burning bluſh.
Whether theſe kindred fiends, or one or all,
Shall aim thy airy ſpirit to enthrall,
Are points, my fondneſs tries in vain to reach;
But truſt my caution! and beware of each!
Leſt to thy lively mind my words may ſeem
The vain chimera of a common dream,
By one unqueſtionable ſign be taught
To prize my preſence in thy waking thought!
An azure ribband, on thy toilet thrown,
Shall make the magic of my empire known:

On

On this thy ſportive needle tried its powers,
And ſilver ſpangles form'd the mimic flowers;
On theſe my love ſhall breathe a ſecret charm;
With this, my cæſtus, thy ſoft boſom arm!
Above it let the decent tucker riſe,
To hide the myſtic band from mortal eyes!
When Spleen's dark Powers would teach that breaſt to ſwell,
This guardian cincture ſhall thoſe Powers repel:
As the touch'd taliſman, more ſwift than thought,
To ſave her charge, th' Arabian Fairy brought;
So ſhall this zone, if juſtly I'm obey'd,
Bring my ſoft ſpirit to thy certain aid.
In Love's great name obſerve this high beheſt!
Revere my power—Be gentle, and be bleſt!"

Here the kind Sprite her friendly counſel clos'd,
And lightly vaniſh'd—Still SERENA doz'd;
Still in ſweet trance ſhe fondly ſeem'd to hear
The ſoft perſuaſion vibrate in her ear.
But waking now far different notes ſhe found;
Leſs pleaſing echoes in her chamber ſound:

For now the heralds of the London day
Sing their loud mattins in th' uncrowded way;
Th' impatient milk-maid now, with early din,
Screams to the rattle of her pail of tin;
With ſweep's faint cry, and, lateſt of the crew,
The deep-ton'd muſic of the murmuring Jew.

END OF THE FIRST CANTO.

CANTO II.

YE radiant nymphs! whoſe opening eyes convey
Warmth to the world, and luſtre to the day!
Think what o'erſhadowing clouds may croſs your brain,
Before thoſe lovely lids ſhall cloſe again!
What funds of patience twelve long hours may aſk,
When cold Diſcretion claims her daily taſk!
Ah think betimes! and, while your morning care
Sheds foreign odors o'er your fragrant hair,
Tinge your ſoft ſpirit with that mental ſweet,
Which may not be exhal'd by paſſion's heat;
But charm the ſenſe, with undecaying power,
Thro' every chance of each diurnal hour!
O! might you all perceive your toilets crown'd
With ſuch coſmetics as SERENA found!
For, to the warning viſion fondly true,
Now the quick fair-one to the toilet flew:

With keen delight her raviſh'd eye ſurvey'd
The myſtic ribband on her mirror laid:
Bright ſhone the azure as Aurora's car,
And every ſpangle ſeem'd a living ſtar.
With ſportive grace the ſmiling damſel preſt
The guardian cincture to her ſnowy breaſt,
More lovely far than Juno, when ſhe ſtrove
To look moſt lovely in the eyes of Jove;
And willing Venus lent her every power,
That ſheds enchantment o'er the amorous hour:
For ſpells more potent on this band were thrown,
Than Venus boaſted in her beauteous zone.
Her dazzling cæſtus could alone inſpire
The ſudden impulſe of ſhort-liv'd deſire:
Theſe finer threads with laſting charms are fraught,
Here lies the tender, but unchanging thought,
Silence, that wins, where eloquence is vain,
And tones, that harmonize the mad'ning brain,
Soft ſighs, that anger cannot hear, and live,
And ſmiles, that tell, how truly they forgive;

And

And lively grace, whoſe gay diffuſive light
Puts the black phantoms of the brain to flight,
Whoſe cheering powers thro' every period laſt,
And make the preſent happy as the paſt.

Such ſecret charms this richer zone poſſeſt,
Whoſe flowers, now ſparkling on SERENA's breaſt,
Give, tho' unſeen thoſe ſwelling orbs they bind,
Smiles to her face, and beauty to her mind:
For now, obſervant of the Sprite's beheſt,
The nymph conceals them by her upper veſt:
Safe lies the ſpell, no mortal may deſcry,
Not keen PENELOPE's all-piercing eye;
Who conſtant, as the ſteps of morn advance,
Surveys the houſhold with a ſearching glance,
And entering now, with all her uſual care,
Reviews the chamber of the youthful fair.
Beneath the pillow, not compleatly hid,
The novel lay—She ſaw—ſhe ſeiz'd—ſhe chid:
With rage and glee her glaring eye-balls flaſh,
Ah wicked age! ſhe cries, ah filthy traſh!

From

From the firſt page my juſt abhorrence ſprings;
For modern anecdotes are monſtrous things:
Yet will I ſee what dangerous poiſons lurk,
To taint thy youth, in this licentious work.
She ſaid: and rudely from the chamber ruſh'd,
Her pallid cheek with expectation fluſh'd,
With ardent hope her eager ſpirit ſhook,
Vain hope! to banquet on a luſcious book.
So if a prieſt, of the Arabian ſect,
In Turkiſh hands forbidden wine detect,
The ſacred muſſulman, with pious din,
Arraigns the culprit, and proclaims the ſin,
Curſes with holy zeal th' inflaming juice,
But curſing takes it for his ſecret uſe.

The gay SERENA, with unruffled mind,
The pleaſing novel, thus unread, reſign'd.
The viſion on her ſoul ſuch virtue left,
She only ſmil'd at the provoking theft;
The teazing incident ſhe deem'd a jeſt,
Nor felt the zone grow tighter on her breaſt.

Now

Now in full charms deſcends the finiſh'd fair,
For now the morning banquet claims her care;
Already at the board, with viands pil'd,
Her ſire impatient ſits, and chides his tardy child.
On his imperial lips rude hunger reigns,
And keener politics uſurp his brains:
But when her love-inſpiring voice he hears,
When the ſoft magic of her ſmile appears,
In that glad moment he at once forgets
His empty ſtomach, and the nation's debts:
He bends to Nature's more divine controul,
And only feels the Father in his ſoul.
Quick to his hand behold her now preſent
The Indian liquor of celeſtial ſcent!
Not with more grace the nectar'd cup is given
By roſe-lip'd Hebe to the lord of heaven.
While her fair hands a freſh libation pour,
Faſhion's loud thunder wakes the ſounding door.
The light SERENA to the window ſprings,
On curioſity's amuſive wings:

Her

Her quick eyes ſparkle with ſurpriſe, to ſee
The glories of a golden vis-à-vis:
Its glittering tablet gleam'd with mimic pearl,
And the rich coronet announc'd an earl.
The good old knight grew ſomewhat proud to hear
Of this new viſit from the early peer:
SERENA recollects the viſion's truth,
And fluttering, hopes it is the promis'd youth:
PENELOPE from her high chamber peeps;
There her unfiniſh'd charms ſhe coyly keeps;
With ſage reſerve her modeſty abhorr'd
To ſhew her morning face before a lord.
The peer alights: the well-rang'd vaſſals bawl
His ſounding title thro' the ſpacious hall,
Till in the deep ſaloon's extremeſt bound
Th' ear-tickling words, "LORD FILLIGREE,"
reſound.
As when great Hector, ſetting war apart,
Advanc'd to parley, with his ſpear athwart,
The Greeks beheld him with a ſtill delight;
And ſilent reverence ſtopt the riſing fight;

With

With ſuch reſpect, but unchaſtis'd by fear,
Sir Gilbert and the nymph firſt meet the peer;
And, while his morning compliments commence,
The ſlighted breakfaſt ſtands in cold ſuſpence.
But far unlike to Hector's ruder grace
His modern ſtature, and his modiſh face!
Nor leſs he differs from thoſe barons old,
Whoſe arms are blazon'd on his car of gold;
Whoſe proſtrate caſtle guarded once the lands,
Where, ſpruce in motley pride, his villa ſtands,
By Taſte erected, in her trimmeſt mode,
Her muſhroom ſtructure, and her quaint abode.
As the neat daiſy to the ſun's broad flower,
As the French boudoir to the Gothic tower,
Such is the peer, whom faſhion much admires,
Compar'd in perſon to his ancient ſires:
For their broad ſhoulder, and their brawny calf,
Their coarſe, loud language, and their coarſer laugh,
His finer form, more elegantly ſlim,
Diſplays the faſhionable length of limb:

With

With foreign ſhrugs his country he regards,
And her lean tongue with foreign words he lards;
While Gallic Graces, who correct his ſtyle,
Forbid his mirth to paſs beyond a ſmile.
As the nice workman in the wooden trade,
Hides his coarſe ground, with fineſt woods o'erlaid,
Thus our young lord, with faſhion's phraſe refin'd,
Fineer'd the mean interior of his mind:
And hence, in courteſy's ſoft luſtre ſeen,
His ſpirit ſhone, as graceful as his mien.
The artleſs fair, on faſhion's kind report,
Thought him the mirror of a matchleſs court:
Much ſhe his dreſs, his language much obſerves,
Whoſe finer accents prove his feeling nerves.
Her fancy now the deſtin'd lover ſpies,
But her free heart abjures the quick ſurmiſe;
Yet as he ſpoke, at every flattering word
The viſion's promiſe to her thought recurr'd.
Far more parental pride contrives to blind
The good SIR GILBERT's more-experienc'd mind,

Who

Who fondly ſaw, and at the proſpect ſmil'd,
A future counteſs in his favourite child.
But what new flutterings ſhook SERENA's breaſt,
What hopes and fears the modeſt nymph oppreſt,
When with a ſimpering ſmile, and ſoft regard,
The peer diſplay'd a mirth-expreſſive card,
Where the gay Graces, in a ſportive band,
Shew the ſweet art of Cipriani's hand;
Where, in their train, his airy Cupids throng,
And laughing drag a comic maſk along!
"We," cries my lord, with ſelf-ſufficient joy,
Twirling, with lordly airs, the graceful toy,
"We, who poſſeſs true ſcience, we, who give
The world a leſſon in the art to live,
We for the fair a ſplendid fête deſign,
And pay our homage thus at Beauty's ſhrine."
He ſpoke; and ſpeaking, to the bluſhing maid,
With modiſh eaſe, th' inviting card convey'd,
Where Mirth announc'd her maſque-devoted hour
In characters intwin'd with many a flower:

The

The bluſhing maid, with eyes of quick deſire,
View'd it, and felt her little ſoul on fire;
For of all ſcenes ſhe had not yet ſurvey'd,
Her heart moſt panted for a maſquerade:
But her gay hopes increaſing terrors drown,
And dread forebodings of her father's frown.
In mute ſuſpence to read his thought ſhe tries,
And ſtrongly pleads with her prevailing eyes,
Her eyes, for doubt enchain'd her modeſt tongue,
While on his ſovereign word her pleaſure hung.
With ſuch a tender, and perſuaſive air
Of ſoft endearment, and of anxious care,
Thetis attended from th' almighty ſire
His fateful anſwer to her fond deſire:
The good old knight, like the Olympian god,
Bleſt the fair ſuppliant with his gracious nod;
Her lively ſpirit the kind ſignal took,
And her glad heart in every fibre ſhook.
The party ſettled, it imports not how,
The peer politely made his parting bow:

The nymph, with eyes that ſparkled joyous fire,
Kiſs'd the round cheek of her complying ſire,
Then ſwiftly flew, and ſummon'd to her aid
Th' important counſel of her favourite maid,
To vent her joy, and, as the moments preſs,
To fix that firſt of points, a fancy-dreſs.

Quick as the poet's eyes o'er nature fly,
Piercing the deep, or traverſing the ſky,
With ſuch light ſpeed her fond ideas glance
O'er play and poem, ſtory and romance,
While all the characters, ſhe e'er has read,
Flaſh on her brain, and fill her buſy head.

Now in Diana's form ſhe hopes to meet
A fond Endymion ſighing at her feet;
Now her proud thought terreſtrial pomp aſſumes,
And Dian's creſcent yields to Indian plumes;
Now, in the habit of the Grecian iſles,
She hears ſome Oſman ſuing for her ſmiles,
And ſees his ſoul that blaze of dreſs outſhine,
Whoſe wealth impoveriſh'd a diamond-mine;

Now ſimpler charms her quick attention draw,
The roſe-crown'd bonnet, and the hat of ſtraw,
A village-maid ſhe ſeems, in neat attire,
A faithful ſhepherd now her ſole deſire.
Thus, as new figures in her fancy throng,
" She's every thing by ſtarts, and nothing long;"
But, in the ſpace of one revolving hour,
Flies thro' all ſtates of poverty and power,
All forms, on whom her veering mind can pitch,
Sultana, gipſy, goddeſs, nymph, and witch.
At length, her ſoul with Shakeſpeare's magic fraught,
The wand of Ariel fixt her roving thought;
Ariel's light graces all her heart poſſeſs,
And Jenny's order'd to prepare the dreſs.
It ſeems already bought, with fond applauſe;
An azure tiſſue, and a ſilver gauze;
Too ſoon, alas! that garb of heavenly hue
The ready mercer flaſhes to her view.
Ah blind to fate! how oft the youthful belle
Feels her gay heart at ſight of tiſſue ſwell!

And thinks the faſhionable ſilk muſt prove
Her robe of triumph, and a ſpell to love!
To thee, ſweet maid, whoſe pleaſure-darting eyes
Joy in this favourite veſt, an hour ſhall riſe,
When thou ſhalt hate the ſilk ſo fondly ſought,
And wiſh thy ſilver-ſpotted gauze unbought * :
For buſy Spleen thy trial now prepares;
Darkly ſhe forms her unſuſpected ſnares,
And, keen to raiſe her pleaſure-killing ſtorm,
Aſſumes PENELOPE's congenial form.
In that prim ſhape, which all the graces ſhun,
See the ſour fiend to good SIR GILBERT run!
Where, deeply pondering the public debt,
Silent he muſes o'er a new gazette!
Ent'ring, ſhe view'd, with eyes of envious ſpite,
The card, that ſpoke the maſque-devoted night:

* Neſcia mens hominum fati ſortiſque futuræ,
Et ſervare modum, rebus ſublata ſecundis.
Turno tempus erit, magno cum optaverit emptum
Intactum Pallanta, et cum ſpolia iſta diemque
Oderit. ÆNEID. x. v. 501. & ſeq.

Eager ſhe darted on the graceful toy,
And, fiercely pointing to each naked boy,
"Canſt thou," ſhe cried, in a diſcordant ſcream,
That rous'd the politician from his dream,
While with her voice the echoing chamber rings,
"* Say! canſt thou ſuffer theſe flagitious things?
Are theſe devices to thy daughter brought,
That wake ſuch groſs impurity of thought?
In vain are all the prudent words I preach,
The modeſt maxims that I ſtrive to teach;
By fooliſh fondneſs of your ſenſe beguil'd,
You ſtill indulge, and ſpoil the flippant child:
For me, whate'er I ſay is deem'd abſurd;
She ſcorns my ſage advice:—but mark my word,
If to this ball you let the hoyden run,
Your power is ended, and the girl undone."
The patriot knight, by interruption vext,
In his political purſuits perplext,

* Ζευ πατερ, ȣ νεμεσιζῃ, ορῶν ταδε καρτερα εργα, &c.
ILIAD ε. v. 872. & ſeq.

While

While he with wrath th' intruding Miſchief eyed,
Stern to the falſe PENELOPE replied:
" Go! teazing prude, ceaſe in my ears to vent
Thy envious pride, and peeviſh diſcontent!
To me of prudence canſt thou vainly boaſt?
Of all my houſhold, thou haſt plagu'd me moſt:
The joys thou blameſt are thy dear delight,
By day the viſit, and the ball by night:
And, tho' too old a lover to trepan,
Thy midnight dream, thy morning thought, is man.
Wert thou leſs cloſely to my blood allied,
Thou ſhould'ſt, to cure thee of thy canting pride,
Be ſent to ſigh alone o'er purling brooks,
Scold village maids, and croak to croaking rooks."
He ſpoke indignant: the ſly fiend withdrew,
Nor inly griev'd; for well her force ſhe knew.
As Indian females, in a jealous hour,
Of ſecret poiſon try the ſubtleſt power,
Which ſure, tho' ſlow, corrodes th' unconſcious prey,
And ends its triumph on a diſtant day:

Thus the departing Fury left behind
Her venom, latent in SIR GILBERT's mind.
The hidden miſchief tho' no eye obſerves,
He feels it fretting on his alter'd nerves;
But the kind habit of his healthy ſoul
Still ſtruggled hard againſt its baſe controul.
Now Spleen's dark vapours, in his boſom hid,
Prompt him the promis'd pleaſure to forbid;
Now Love's ſoft pleadings that dire thought deſtroy,
And ſave the bloſſom of his daughter's joy;
Her envious aunt now ſerves him for a jeſt,
And gay good-humour reaſſumes his breaſt.

While Spleen's dark power now ſinks, and now revives,
At length the day, th' important day, arrives,
Which in his breaſt muſt end the cloſe debate,
And fix the colour of SERENA's fate.

Now comes the hour, when the convivial knight
Waits to begin the dinner's chearful rite:
His fond heart ever, with a father's pride,
Joys to behold his darling at his ſide;

But

But moſt the abſence of her ſmile he feels
In the gay ſeaſon of his ſocial meals:
Hence, while for her the rich repaſt attends,
His haſty ſummons to the nymph he ſends:
The happy nymph ſuperior cares induce
To riſk his anger by a raſh excuſe:
She craves his pardon; but, for time diſtreſt,
She ſtill is buſy on her magic veſt;
To range her diamonds in a ſparkling zone,
She begs to ſnatch her ſcanty meal alone.

The knight in ſullen ſtate begins to dine:
Spleen, like a harpy, flutters o'er his wine:
Inviſible ſhe poiſons every diſh,
Tinging with gall his mutton, fowl, and fiſh.
The more he eats, the more perverſe he grows;
For as his hunger ſunk, his choler roſe.
The cloth remov'd, he cries, with vapours ſick,
The pears are mellow, and the port is thick;
Tho' nicer fruit Pomona never knew,
And his rich wine ſurpaſs'd the ruby's hue!

A thouſand times his dizzy brain revolves
A ſtern command: now doubts, and now reſolves
To bid the nymph deſcend, and, diſarray'd,
Quit her dear project of the maſquerade:
As oft kind nature to his heart recurr'd,
And love parental ſtopt the cruel word.

Mean time, unconſcious of the brooding ſtorm,
The nymph exults in her improving form:
Gay is her ſmile, as thoſe the queen of love
Darts on the Graces in her court above,
While they contrive, with love-inſpiring cares,
New modes of beauty for the robe ſhe wears.
At length, each duty of the toilet paſt,
The glance of triumph on the mirror caſt,
Now the light wand our finiſh'd Ariel arms;
Glad Jenny glories in her lady's charms;
And gives full utterance, as ſhe ſmooths her veſt,
To the ſweet bodings of SERENA's breaſt.

O! lovely bias of the female ſoul!
Which trembling points to pleaſure's diſtant pole;

Which

Which with fond truſt on flattering hope relies,
O'erleaps each peril, that in proſpect lies,
And ſpringing to the goal, anticipates the prize!
Such was SERENA's fear-diſcarding ſtate;
Her eye beheld not the dark frowns of fate:
She only ſaw, the combat all forgot,
The triumph promis'd as her glorious lot.

Now, eager to diſplay her light attire,
The ſprightly damſel ſeeks her ſullen ſire;
His gloomy brow with ſportive air ſhe kiſt:
Ah! how could Spleen that magic lip reſiſt?
That voice, whoſe melting muſic might aſſuage
The ſcorpion Anger's ſelf-tormenting rage?
For ne'er did nature to a ſire's embrace
Preſent a filial form of ſofter grace;
Or fancy view a ſhape of lovelier kind
In the bright mirror of her Shakeſpeare's mind.

The ſulky fiend, in ſpite of all her art,
Had now been baniſh'd from the father's heart,
But that, reſolv'd her utmoſt force to try,
She ſummon'd to her aid her old ally,

The

The fiery demon, temper-troubling Gout,
Who ſinks the lively, and appals the ſtout;
Who now, aſſiſting Spleen's malignant aim,
Shoots in quick throbbings through SIR GILBERT'S frame.
Thus ſorely peſter'd by a double foe,
Galling his giddy brain, and burning toe,
The teſty knight, with ſtern and ſullen air,
Denounc'd his humour to the ſhudd'ring fair:
"Go change your dreſs! give up this vain delight!
I will not hear of maſquerades to-night:
Your chaperone's inform'd ſhe need not wait,
So change your dreſs! and ſit with me ſedate."
As the proud dame, whoſe avaricious glee
Built golden caſtles in the rich South Sea,
Gaz'd on her broker, when he told her firſt
Her wealth was vaniſh'd, and the bubble burſt:
So gaz'd the nymph, hearing her ſire deſtroy
Her airy palace of ideal joy.
Firſt her fond thoughts to flattering doubt incline,
And deem the harſh command no fix'd deſign,

But

Stothard del.

Heath sculp.

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But the quick ſally of a peeviſh word,
That love revokes, the moment it is heard:
Or haply mirth, in mimic wrath expreſt,
A feign'd forbiddance utter'd but in jeſt:
To this ſhort hope her ſinking ſpirit clung,
To ſee his ſoftening eyes refute his tongue.
Ah fruitleſs hope! for there ſhe cannot find
The well-known ſignals of the friendly mind.
Stern contradiction, with the frown of fate,
On his dark viſage reign'd in ſullen ſtate;
Felt in each feature, in each accent ſhown,
Lower'd in his look, and thunder'd in his tone.
Hence the warm boſom of the lively fair
Now ſhivers with the chill of blank deſpair:
Now diſappointment's thick'ning ſhadows roll
A cloud of horror o'er the darken'd ſoul;
And fancy, in a ſick delirium toſt,
Gives double value to each pleaſure loſt.
The blaſted joys, ſhe labours to forget,
Ruſh on her mind, and waken keen regret:

Her

Her cheek turns pale—the tear prepares to ſtart,
And palpitation heaves her ſwelling heart.
But here, SOPHROSYNE! thy guardian aid
Saves from her potent foe the ſinking maid.
Her boſom, into ſtrong emotions thrown,
Now feels the preſſure of thy friendly zone.
Swift thy kind cautions to her ſoul recur,
More quick to cancel faults, than prone to err.
As the rough ſwell of the inſurgent tides
By the mild impulſe of the moon ſubſides:
So, by her myſtic monitor repreſt,
The flood of paſſion leaves her lighten'd breaſt,
From her clear brain each cloudy vapour flies,
And joy's bright ray rekindles in her eyes.
Reviving gaiety full luſtre ſpread
O'er all her features, and with ſmiles ſhe ſaid:
"Let others drive to pleaſure's diſtant dome!
Be mine the dearer joy to pleaſe at home!"
Scarce had ſhe ſpoke, when ſhe with ſportive eaſe
Preſt her piano-forte's fav'rite keys,

O'er

O'er ſofteſt notes her rapid fingers ran,
Sweet prelude to the Air ſhe thus began!

SOPHROSYNE! thou guard unſeen!
Whoſe delicate controul
Can turn the diſcord of chagrin
To harmony of ſoul!
Above the lyre, the lute above,
Be mine thy melting tone,
Which makes the peace of all we love
The baſis of our own!

So ſung the nymph, not uninſpir'd: the ſprite
Invok'd ſo fondly in the myſtic rite,
With richeſt muſic ſwell'd her warbling throat,
And gave new ſweetneſs to her ſweeteſt note.
As when the ſeraph Uriel firſt begun
His carol to the new-created ſun,
The ſacred echo ſhook the vaſt profound,
And chaos periſh'd at the potent ſound:

So,

So, at the magic of SERENA's ſtrain,
Spleen vaniſh'd from her ſire's chaotic brain;
Whoſe fibres, lighten'd of that load, rejoice
In the dear accents of her dulcet voice.
Much he inclines his mandate to recall,
And ſend the fair-one to the promis'd ball;
But ſtubborn pride forbids him to revoke
The ſolemn ſentence, which ill-humour ſpoke.
Still, conſcious of her power, the nymph prolongs
The ſoft enchantment of her ſoothing ſongs;
Which his fond mind in firm attention keep,
To his fixt hour of ſupper and of ſleep:
This now arriv'd, the knight, retiring, ſhed
A double bleſſing on his darling's head;
And with unuſual exultation preſt
His lovely child to his parental breaſt.

Thus while to reſt the happy ſire withdrew,
The nymph, more happy, to her chamber flew;
And, Jenny now diſmiſs'd, the grateful fair
Breathes to her guardian Sprite this tender prayer:

"Thou

" Thou kind preſerver ! whoſe attentive zeal
Gives me in this contented hour to feel
That deareſt pleaſure of a ſoul refin'd,
The triumph of the ſelf-corrected mind ;
If, happy in the ſtrength thy ſmiles impart,
I own thy favour in no thankleſs heart,
Still let me view thy form, ſo juſtly dear !
Still in kind viſions to theſe eyes appear !
Thy friendly dictates teach me to fulfil !
And let thy aid avert each future ill !"

While fond devotion taught her thus to ſpeak,
The ſoft down ſinks beneath her lovely cheek,
And ſettling on her lips, that ſweetly cloſe,
Silence, enamour'd, lulls her to repoſe.

END OF THE SECOND CANTO.

CANTO

CANTO III.

YE kind tranſporters of th' excurſive ſoul!
Ye viſions! that, when night enwraps the pole,
The lively wanderer to new worlds convey,
Eſcaping from her heavy houſe of clay,
How could the gentle ſpirit, foe to ſtrife,
Bear without you this coil of waking life?
Its grief-embitter'd cares, its joyleſs mirth,
And all the flat realities of earth?
Sweet phantoms! you the glowing hope inſpire,
You give to beauty charms, to fancy fire,
When, ſoaring like the eagle's kindred frame,
The poet dreams of everlaſting fame;
Or, tickled by the feather of the dove,
The ſofter virgin dreams of endleſs love.
There was a time, when fortune's bright decrees
Were ſeen to realize ſuch dreams as theſe:

Now

Now dangerous viſions the fond mind decoy
Vainly to pant for unexiſting joy,
While belles and bards with mournful ſighs exclaim,
Mortality has ſeiz'd both Love and Fame.

Ah fair SERENA, might the boaſt be ours
To clear from ſuch a charge theſe heavenly powers!
Bleſt! might thy bard deſerve in Fame to ſee
A guard as faithful, as Love proves to thee!
Bleſt! if that airy being gild his life,
Who ſav'd thee trembling on the brink of ſtrife,
And now, kind prompter of thy nightly dream,
Fill'd thy rapt ſpirit with her ſacred beam!
For ſoon as ſlumber ſet thy ſoul at large,
Thy Guardian Power reviſited her charge;
And, lightly hovering o'er th' illumin'd bed,
Thus with fond ſmiles of approbation ſaid:
"Well haſt thou paſt, ſweet maid, one trying ſcene,
One fiery ordeal of the tyrant Spleen:

Thus, my SERENA, may thy force ſuſtain
Each harder trial, that may yet remain!
Againſt the fiend to fortify thy ſoul,
By uſeful knowledge of her dark controul,
I come to ſhow thee, what no mortal eye,
Save thine, was e'er permitted to deſcry;
The realms, where Spleen's infernal agents goad
The ghoſtly tenants of her drear abode.
Now ſummon all thy ſtrength! throw fear aſide,
And firmly truſt in thy ætherial guide!"
She ſpoke: and thro' the night's ſurrounding ſhade
Th' obedient nymph, not unappall'd, convey'd;
Thro' long, long tracts of darkneſs, on they paſt
With ſpeed, that ſtruck the trembling maid aghaſt,
Till now, recovering by degrees, ſhe found
Her ſoft foot preſs upon the ſolid ground.
Encourag'd by her guide, at length ſhe tries
To ſearch the gloomy ſcene, with anxious eyes.

* " Thro' me ye paſs to Spleen's terrific dome,
Thro' me, to Diſcontent's eternal home:
Thro' me, to thoſe, who ſadden'd human life,
By ſullen humour or vexatious ſtrife;
And here, thro' ſcenes of endleſs vapours hurl'd,
Are puniſh'd in the forms they plagued the world;
Juſtly they feel no joy, who none beſtow,
All ye who enter, every hope forego!"
O'er an arch'd cavern, rough with horrid ſtone,
On which a feeble light, by flaſhes, ſhone,
Theſe characters, that chill'd her ſoul with dread,
SERENA, fixt in ſilent wonder, read.
As ſhe began to ſpeak, her voice was drown'd
By the ſhrill echo of far other ſound:

* Per me ſi va nella citta dolente,
Per me ſi va nell' eterno dolore,
Per me ſi va tra la perduta gente,
* * * * * * * * *
Laſciate ogni ſperanza, voi ch' intrate.
Queſte parole di colore oſcuro
Vid' io ſcritte al ſommo d'una porta.

DANTE, Inferno. 3.

Forth from the portal lamentable cries
Of wailing infants, without number, riſe.
Compaſſion to this poor and piteous flock
Led the ſoft maid ſtill nearer to the rock.
The pining band within ſhe now eſpied,
And, touch'd with tender indignation, cried,
" How could theſe little forms, of life ſo brief,
Deſerve this dire abode of laſting grief?"
" —Well may thy gentle heart be ſore concern'd
At ſight ſo moving," the mild Sprite return'd:
" Thou ſeeſt in thoſe, whoſe wailings wound thy ears,
The puny progeny of modern peers:
Their ſires, by avarice or ambition led,
Aliens to love, approach'd the nuptial bed;
With proud indifference, and with cold diſtaſte,
Their homely brides reluctantly embrac'd,
And by ſuch union gave diſaſtrous birth
To theſe poor pale incumbrances of earth,
Who, bred in vanity, with pride their dower,
Were Spleen's ſure victims from their natal hour,

And

And in their ſplendid cradles pul'd and pin'd,
Till Fate their ill-ſpun thread of life untwin'd,
And to this veſtibule convey'd their ghoſts,
To form the van-guard of th' infernal hoſts.
But let not pity's ineffectual charm
Impede thy progreſs, or thy ſtrength diſarm!
Follow and fear not! guarded by my care
From all the phantoms that around thee glare."

She ſpoke; and enter'd, ere the nymph replied,
A paſs, that open'd in the cavern's ſide,
Low, dark, and rocky—with her body bent,
SERENA follow'd down the dire deſcent.
A ſudden light ſoon ſtruck her dazzled view;
But 'twas a light of ſuch infernal hue,
As double horror to the darkneſs gave,
With dread reflection from a duſky wave.
Round a black water tatter'd ſpectres ſtand,
With each a tiny taper in its hand;
Fierce mendicants! who ſtrive ſome alms to win
From the fair wanderer, with inceſſant din.

The guardian Spirit ſaw SERENA grieve,
To hear of wants ſhe knew not to relieve;
And to the generous nymph in pity cries:
" The gulf of Indolence before us lies,
O'er whoſe dull flood, to which no bank is ſeen,
A boat muſt waft thee to the dome of Spleen.
Theſe pallid figures, that around thee preſs,
And haunt thee with importunate diſtreſs,
On earth were beggars of each different claſs,
Tho' blended here in one promiſcuous maſs.
The poor, who ſpurn'd kind induſtry's controul,
The rich, who begg'd from penury of ſoul:
Both by their abject pride alike debas'd,
Blaſphem'd that nature, which they both diſgrac'd,
And, hither by the ſullen fiend convey'd,
Here ſtill they ply their ineffectual trade;
In chaſe of each new paſſenger they run,
Condemn'd to beg from all, to gain by none.
But from theſe wretches turn thy fruitleſs care!
Behold the gulf before thee, and beware!

Nor

Nor touch the ſtream, which mortal ſenſe o'ercomes,
And by its baleful charm the ſoul benumbs!"
"—Can mortal paſs!" the ſhudd'ring nymph replied,
"This ſullen, ſlow, unnavigable tide,
In whoſe black current this enormous mound
Of ſhapeleſs ſtone appears, this horrid bound,
That ſeems an everlaſting guard to keep
O'er the dull waters, that beneath it creep?"
While yet ſhe ſpoke, with a reſounding ſhock,
Forth from the arch of the impending rock,
Which o'er the murmuring eddy hung ſo low,
The lazy river ſcarce had room to flow,
Of rude conſtruction, and in roughеſt plight,
A boat now iſſued to SERENA'S ſight;
An empty boat, that ſlowly to the ſhore
Advanc'd, without the aid of ſail or oar;
Self-mov'd it ſeem'd, but ſoon the nymph beheld
A griſly figure, who the ſtern impell'd.

Wading behind, the horrid form appear'd ;
Above the water his ſtrong arm he rear'd,
And croſs the creeping flood the crazy veſſel ſteer'd.
The heavenly Sprite obſerv'd her trembling ward,
Whoſe growing fears the hideous paſs abhorr'd,
And cheering thus ſhe ſpake : " This ſpectre boaſts
The chief dominion of theſe dreary coaſts :
To him, thy pilot, without dread conſign,
And place thy body in his bark ſupine !
So thro' this arching rock thou'lt paſs alone,
Safe from the perils of th' incumbent ſtone :
Embark undaunted !—on the farther ſide
Thou'lt ſurely find me, thy unfailing guide.
Nor let this pilot raiſe thy groundleſs dread,
This ſullen Charon of the froward dead,
A phantom, never bleſt with human life,
Tho' oft on earth his noxious power is rife ;
And in that region, ne'er from error free,
The words he dictates are aſſign'd to me.

Obſerve

Stothard. del.

Heath. Sculp.t

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Obſerve this fiend, that Nature ſcorn'd to frame,
Offspring of Pride, and Apathy his name!
Paſſions he ne'er can feel, and ne'er impart,
A miſcreated imp, without a heart;
In place of which, his ſubtle parent pinn'd
A bladder, fill'd with circulating wind,
Which ſeems with mimic life the maſs to warm,
And gives falſe vigour to his bloated form.
But place thee in the boat his arms direct,
My love ſhall watch thee, and my power protect."
So ſpake the friendly Sprite; th' obedient maid
Her form along the narrow veſſel laid:
But oh! what terrors ſhake her tender ſoul,
As from the ſhore the bark begins to roll,
And, ſever'd from her friend, her eyes diſcern
The ſteering ſpectre wading at the ſtern!
Far ſtronger fears her reſolution melt,
Than thoſe, which erſt the bard of Florence felt,
When, by the honour'd ſhade of Virgil led
Thro' all the dreary circles of the dead,

Hell's

Hell's fierceſt demons threaten'd to divide
The living poet from his ſhadowy guide;
And bade him, friendleſs, and alone, return,
Thro' the dire horrors of the dark ſojourn.
Not long the lovely fair one's terrors laſt;
For ſafely thro' th' impending rock ſhe paſt:
And ſlow advancing to the gloomy ſtrand,
The ſullen pilot brings her ſafe to land.
There, fondly hovering on her guardian plumes,
The heavenly Monitor her charge reſumes;
And ſmiling, leads along the rocky road,
Whoſe windings open into Spleen's abode.

Thou queen of ſhades! whoſe ſpirit-damping ſpell
Too oft is ſeen the poet's pride to quell,
May I, unpuniſh'd by thy ſubtle power,
Dare to diſplay thy ſubterranean bower,
And to this wond'ring upper world explain
The ſhadowy horrors of thy ſecret reign?

Entering beneath a wide fantaſtic arch,
Round the drear circuit of the dome they march;

Which

Which a pale flaſh from many a fiery ſprite
Frequent illumes with intermitting light;
Such, as on earth, to Superſtition's eye,
Denounces ruin from the northern ſky,
While ſhe diſcerns, amid the nightly glare,
Armies embattled in the blazing air.

Around the nymph unnumber'd phantoms glide;
Here ſwell the bloated race of bulky Pride:
In cloſe and horrid union, there appear
The wilder progeny of frantic Fear;
Miſ-ſhapen monſters! whoſe ſtupendous frame
Abhorrent Nature has refus'd to name.
Here, in cameleon colours, lightly flit
The motley offspring of diſorder'd Wit.
All things prodigious the wide cave contain'd,
And forms, beyond what fable ever feign'd:
But, as the worm, that on the dewy green
Springs half to view, and half remains unſeen,
Perceiving near its cell a human tread,
Slinks back to earth, and hides its timid head:

So,

So, where the heavenly Spirit deign'd to lead,
The ſtartled ſpectres from her ſtep recede;
And, as abaſh'd they from her eye retire,
Sink into miſt, or melt in fluid fire.

High on an ebon throne, ſuperbly wrought
With each fierce figure of fantaſtic thought,
In a deep cove, where no bright beam intrudes,
O'er her black ſchemes the ſullen empreſs broods.
The ſcreech-owl's mingled with the raven's plume
Shed o'er her furrow'd brows an awful gloom;
A garb, that glares with ſtripes of lurid flame,
Wraps in terrific pomp her haggard frame;
Round her a ſerpent, as her zone, is roll'd,
Which, writhing, ſtings itſelf in every fold.

Near her pavilion, in barbaric ſtate,
Four mutes the mandates of their queen await.
From ſickly Fancy bred, by ſullen Sloth,
Both parents' curſe, yet pamper'd ſtill by both,
Firſt ſtands Diſeaſe; an hag of magic power,
Varying her frightful viſage every hour,

Her

Her horrors heightening, as thoſe changes laſt,
And each new form more hideous than the paſt.
Detraction next, a ſhapeleſs fiend, appears,
Whoſe ſhrivell'd hand a miſty mirror rears;
Fram'd by malignant Art, th' infernal toy
Inverts the lovely mien of ſmiling Joy,
Robs roſeate Beauty of attractive grace,
And gives a ſtepdame's frown to Nature's face.
The third in place, but with a fiercer air,
See the true Gorgon Diſappointment glare!
By whoſe petrific power Delight's o'erthrown;
And Hope's warm heart becomes an icy ſtone.
Laſt, in a gorgeous robe, that, ill beſtow'd,
Bows her mean body by its cumbrous load,
Stands fretful Diſcontent, of fiends the worſt,
By dignity debas'd, by bleſſings curſt,
Who poiſons Pleaſure with the ſoureſt leaven,
And makes a hell of Love's ecſtatic heaven.
The guide celeſtial, near this ghaſtly group,
Perceiv'd her tender charge with terror droop:

" Fear

" Fear not, ſweet maid," ſhe cries, " my ſteps purſue!
Nor gaze too long on this infernal crew!
Turn from Detraction's faſcinating glaſs!
In ſilence croſs the throne! obſerve, and paſs!
Beyond this dome, the palace of the queen,
Her empire winds thro' many a dreary ſcene,
Where ſhe torments, as their deſerts require,
Her various victims, that on earth expire;
Each claſs apart: for in a different cell
The fierce, the fretful, and the ſullen dwell:
Theſe ſhalt thou ſlightly view, in vapours hurl'd,
And ſwiftly then regain thy native world.
But firſt remark, within that ample nich,
With every quaint device of ſplendor rich,
Yon phantom, who, from vulgar eyes withdrawn,
Appears to ſtretch in one eternal yawn:
Of empire here he holds the tottering helm,
Prime miniſter in Spleen's diſcordant realm,
The pillar of her ſpreading ſtate, and more,
Her darling offspring, whom on earth ſhe bore;

For,

For, as on earth his wayward mother ſtray'd,
Grandeur, with eyes of fire, her form ſurvey'd,
And with ſtrong paſſion ſtarting from his throne,
Unloos'd the ſullen queen's reluctant zone.
From his embrace, conceiv'd in moody joy,
Roſe the round image of a bloated boy:
His nurſe was Indolence; his tutor Pomp,
Who kept the child from every childiſh romp;
They rear'd their nurſling to the bulk you ſee,
And his proud parents call'd their imp ENNUI.
This realm he rules, and in ſuperb attire
Viſits each earthly palace of his ſire:
A thouſand ſhapes he wears, now pert, now prim,
Purſues each grave conceit, or idle whim;
In arms, in arts, in government engages,
With monarchs, poets, politicians, ſages;
But drops each work, the moment it's begun,
And, trying all things, can accompliſh none:
Yet o'er each rank, and age, and ſex, his ſway
Spreads undiſcern'd, and makes the world his prey.

The

The light coquet, amid flirtation, ſighs,
To find him lurk in Pleaſure's vain diſguiſe;
And the grave nun diſcovers, in her cell,
That holy water but augments his ſpell.
As the ſtrange monſter of the ſerpent breed,
That haunts, as travellers tell, the marſhy mead,
Devours each nobler beaſt, tho' firmly grown
To ſize and ſtrength ſuperior to his own;—
For on the grazing horſe, or larger bull,
Subtly he ſprings, of dark ſaliva full,
With ſwiftly-darting tongue his prey anoints
With venom, potent to diſſolve its joints,
And, while its bulk in liquid poiſon ſwims,
Swallows its melting bone and fluid limbs:—
So this Ennui, this wonder-working elf,
Can vanquiſh powers far mightier than himſelf:
Nor Wit nor Science ſoar his reach above,
And oft he ſeizes on ſucceſsful Love.
Of all the radiant hoſt who lend their aid
To light mankind thro' life's bewildering ſhade,

Bright

Bright Charity alone, with cloudleſs ray,
May boaſt exemption from his baleful ſway:
Haſte then, ſweet nymph, nor let us longer roam
Round the drear circle of this dangerous dome!
Leſt e'en thy guide, entangled in his ſpell,
Should fail to guard thee from a fiend ſo fell!"

So ſpeaking, the kind Spirit's anxious care
Led from the palace the attentive fair,
And, winding through a paſſage dark and rude,
Thus the mild monitor her ſpeech renew'd:
" 'Gainſt fear and pity now thy boſom ſteel,
For ſights more horrible I now reveal!
Spleen's tortur'd victims view with dauntleſs eyes;
For lo! her penal realms before thee riſe!"
The nymph advancing ſaw, with mute amaze,
A diſmal, deep, enormous dungeon blaze.
Stones of red fire the hideous wall compos'd;
And maſſive gates the horrid confine clos'd.
Th' infernal portreſs of this doleful dome,
With fiery lips, that ſwell'd with poiſonous foam,

Pale Diſcord, rag'd; with whoſe tormenting tongue,
Thro' all its caves th' extenſive region rung:
A living vulture was the fury's creſt;
And in her hand a rattleſnake ſhe preſt,
Whoſe angry joints inceſſantly were heard
To ſound defiance to the ſcreaming bird.
" The boundleſs depth of this dire priſon holds
The untam'd ſpirits of imperious ſcolds:
Nor think that females only fill the cave!
Male termagants have liv'd, and here they rave.
All of each ſex are pent within this pale,
Who knew no uſe of language, but to rail."
Thus to her charge exclaim'd the heavenly guide,
And, as ſhe ſpoke, the portals open'd wide,
And to th' obſervance of the ſhuddering maid,
Th' immeaſurable den was all diſplay'd.
But oh! what various noiſes from within
Fill the vext air with one ſtupendous din!
Mourning's deep groan, and anger's furious call,
Terror's loud cry, and affectation's ſquall,

The

The ſob of paſſion, the hyſteric ſcream,
And ſhrieks of frenzy, in its fierce extreme!
In this wild uproar every ſound's combin'd,
That ſtuns the ſenſes, and diſtracts the mind.
"Mark" (to the nymph SOPHROSYNE began)
"The fierce Xantippe flaming in the van,
The vaſe, ſhe emptied on the ſage's head,
Hangs o'er her own, a different ſhower to ſhed;
For, drop by drop, diſtilling liquid fire,
It fills the vixen with new tropes of ire.
Beyond the Grecian dame extend your view,
And mark the ſpectre of a modern ſhrew!
She, who whene'er ſhe din'd, with furious look,
Spurn'd her nice food, and bellow'd at her cook,
Here juſtly feels a culinary rack,
Bound like Ixion, to a whirling jack."
SERENA gaz'd, but ſoon ſhe turn'd away,
Mute with diſguſt, and ſhuddering with diſmay.
"To ſcenes leſs hideous let us now repair!"
(Said the kind guard of the dejected fair)

And, cheering her faint charge, her ſtep ſhe led
To the near dwelling of the fretful dead.

Of duſky adamant the dungeon roſe;
A dingy mirror its dark ſides compoſe,
Reflecting, with a thouſand quaint grimaces,
The pale inhabitants' diſtorted faces.
" Here, like a dame of quality array'd,
Sits Peeviſhneſs, preſiding o'er the ſhade,
And frowning at her own uncomely mien,
Whoſe coarſe reflection on the wall is ſeen.
A ſnarling lap-dog her right-hand reſtrains,
Her lap an infant porcupine contains,
Which, while her fondneſs tries its wrath to ſtill,
Wounds her each moment with a pointed quill.
The froward ſpirits here in durance fret,
Whoſe teſty life was one continued pet;
Here they in trifles that vexation find,
Which teaz'd on earth their irritated mind.
Obſerve the phantom, who with eyes aſkance
Still to the mirror turns her eager glance!

See!

See! to her cheek, inceſſant as ſhe turns,
Her vex'd blood ruſhes, and her viſage burns.
Beauty for laſting bliſs had form'd the maid;
Love to her charms his faithful homage paid;
But, all this ſwelling tide of joy to check,
A fatal freckle riſes on her neck:
Her ſoft coſmetics the griev'd nymph applies,
Succeſs attends her, and the freckle dies:
But ah! this victory avails her not;
She finds an hydra in the teazing ſpot:
Faſt as one flies, another ſtill ſucceeds,
And with eternal food her fretful humour feeds.

Near to the nymph, in a more moody fit,
See the pale phantom of a peeviſh wit!
Mark with what frowns his eager eyes peruſe,
Wet from the preſs, three Critical Reviews!
With wounded vanity's diſtracting rage
How rapidly he runs thro' every page!
He finds ſome honours laviſh'd on his verſe,
And joy's faint gleams his gloomy ſpirit pierce.

But oh! too ſoon theſe feeble ſparks decay;
And keen vexation reaſſumes her prey.
Hating reproof, in every fibre ſore,
One cenſur'd particle torments him more,
More than a hundred happier lines delight,
Which liberal favour condeſcends to cite.
But time will fail us, if we pauſe to view
The various torments of the teſty crew;
Theſe wretched chymiſts, whoſe o'erheated brain
Extracts from nothing a ſubſtantial pain.
Yet, ere to different diſtricts we advance,
Take of one fretful tribe a tranſient glance!
Their unſuſpected puniſhments ſupply
A leſſon, uſeful to the female eye.
Spleen's livelieſt agent here beguiles the gay,
Fair to attract, and flattering to betray."
As thus the kind æthereal guardian ſpoke,
Within a rock, whence plaintive murmurs broke,
She touch'd a ſecret ſpring, whoſe power was ſuch,
Two jarring doors unfolded at the touch,

And,

And, with the charms of regal ſplendor bright,
A chearful banquet ſparkles to the ſight.
Viands ſo light, ſo elegantly grac'd,
Might tempt e'en Temperance herſelf to taſte;
For fruits alone compos'd th' enticing treat,
Fair to the eye, and to the palate ſweet.
In ſuch bright juice the peach and cherry ſwim,
As make the topaz and the ruby dim.
Here crown'd with every flower, and gaily dreſt
In all the glitter of a Gallic veſt,
Whoſe ample folds her loathſome body ſcreen'd,
A child of luxury reigns, a ſubtle fiend!
Who, with a grace that every heart allures,
Smiles on the luſtre of her rich *liqueurs*.
Her fatal ſmiles their utmoſt power exert
To poiſon beauty at her dire deſſert;
To blaſt the roſe that health's bright cheek adorns,
And fill each feſtive heart with latent thorns:
For the ſly fiend, of every art poſſeſt,
Steals on th' affection of her female gueſt;

And, by her ſoft addreſs ſeducing each,
Eager ſhe plies them with a brandy peach:
They with keen lip the luſcious fruit devour;
But ſwiftly feel its peace-deſtroying power.
Quick thro' each vein new tides of frenzy roll:
All evil paſſions kindle in the ſoul,
Drive from each feature every chearful grace,
And glare ferocious in the ſallow face;
The wounded nerves in furious conflict tear,
Then ſink, in blank dejection and deſpair.
Effects more dire, thus tempting to deceive,
The apple wrought not in the ſoul of Eve;
Howe'er diſguis'd, in jelly or in jam,
Spleen has no poiſon ſurer than a dram.

"But haſte we now" (the heavenly leader cries)
"To where this penal world's laſt wonder lies!"
She ſpoke; and led the nymph thro' deeper dells,
Low-murmuring vaults, and horror-breathing cells.
And now they paſs a perforated cage,
Where rancorous ſpectres without number rage.

"Avert

" Avert thine eye !" (the heavenly Spirit ſaid)
" Nor view theſe abject tribes of envious dead !
Who pin'd to hear the voice of truth proclaim
A ſiſter's beauty, or a brother's fame !
Tho' crown'd with all proſperity imparts,
High in their various ranks, and ſeveral arts ;
Yet, meanly ſunk by envy's baſe controul,
They died in that conſumption of the ſoul ;
And here, thro' bars that twiſted adders make,
And the long volumes of th' envenom'd ſnake,
O'er this dark road they dart an anxious eye,
Still envying every fiend that flutters by.
Paſs ! and regard them not !"—Th' attentive maid
In ſilent tremor the beheſt obey'd.

This dungeon croſt, her weary feet ſhe drags
Thro' winding caverns, and o'er icy crags :
Soul-chilling damps in the dark paſſage reign,
Which iſſues on a vaſt and dreary plain,
Fann'd by no breezes, with no verdure crown'd ;
The black horizon is its only bound.

And

And now advancing, in a drizzly miſt,
Thro' ſullen phantoms, hating to exiſt,
SERENA ſpies, high o'er his ſubjects plac'd,
The ghaſtly tyrant of the gloomy waſte.
Murmuring he ſits upon a rocking ſtone,
Th' unſtable baſe of his ill-founded throne:
Hideous his face, and horrible his frame,
Miſanthropy the griſly monſter's name!
Him to fierce Pride, with raging paſſion ſore,
The frowning gorgon, Diſappointment, bore;
On earth deteſted, and by heaven abhorr'd,
Of this drear wild he reigns the moody lord.
Few are the ſubjects of his waſte domain,
And ſcarce a female in his frightful train,
Except one changing corps of ancient prudes:
Reluctant here the prying band intrudes.
Each, who on earth, behind her artful fan,
Feign'd coarſe averſion to the creature man,
Is doom'd, in this dark region, to abide
Some tranſient pains for hypocritic pride.

Here

Here ever-during chains thoſe ſcoffers bind,
Whoſe writings deaden and debaſe the mind;
Who mock creation with injurious ſcorn,
And feel a fancied void in plenty's horn.
In his right-hand, an emblem of his cares,
A branch of aconite the monarch bears;
And thoſe four phantoms, who this region haunt,
He feeds with berries from this deadly plant;
For, ſtrange to tell! tho' ſever'd from its root,
The bough ſtill blackens with ſucceſſive fruit.
The tribes, who taſte it, burſt into a fit
Of raving mockery and rancorous wit;
And, pleas'd their tyrant's ghaſtly ſmile to court,
By vile diſtortions make him various ſport.
The frantic rabble, who his ſway confeſs,
Before his throne an hideous puppet dreſs;
When in unſeemly rags they have array'd
The image, from their own dark ſemblance made,
In horrid gambols round their work they throng,
With antic dance and rude diſcordant ſong;

Satire's

Satire's rank offals on the block they fling,
And call it nature, to delight their king:
While in their features he exults to ſee
The frowns of torture, mixt with grins of glee.
For, as theſe abject toils engage the crew,
Their own grim idol darkens to their view;
Wide and more wide its horrid ſtature ſpreads,
And o'er the tribe new conſternation ſheds:
For each forgets, in his bewilder'd gaze,
'Tis but a monſter, which he help'd to raiſe.
As o'er its form their dizzy glances roll,
It ſtrikes a chearleſs damp thro' all the ſoul.
Vainly to ſhun the baleful ſight they try,
It draws for ever the reluctant eye:
At each review with deeper dread they ſtart;
A colder chaos numbs each freezing heart.
No mutual confidence, no friendly care,
Relieves the panic they are doom'd to bear;
For as they ſhrink abſorb'd in wild affright,
When each to each inclines his wounded ſight,

They

They feel, for ſocial comfort, ſour diſguſt,
And all the ſullen anguiſh of diſtruſt.

Around theſe wretches in the drear abode,
The ghaſtly grinning fiend Deriſion rode,
Who to their wayward minds on earth ſupplied
Perverted ridicule's malignant tide.
His ſteed of Pegaſus the ſemblance bore;
But with falſe wings, that knew not how to ſoar:
Where'er he paſs'd, with miſchief in his look,
A ſounding whip of knotted ſnakes he ſhook;
And laugh'd in laſhing each pretended ſage,
Whoſe malice wore the maſk of moral rage.
An uncouth bugle his left-hand diſplay'd,
From a grey monkey's ſkull by Cunning made,
And form'd to pour, in harmony's deſpite,
Sounds that each jarring ſenſe of pain excite:
And now his livid lips this bugle blew;
Thro' every den the piercing diſcord flew:
The fiends all anſwer'd in one hideous yell,
And in a fearful trance SERENA fell.

Hence

Hence from the lovely nymph her ſenſes fled,
Till, thro' the parted curtains of her bed,
The amorous ſun, who now began to riſe,
Kiſt, with a ſportive beam, her opening eyes.

END OF THE THIRD CANTO.

CANTO IV.

HAIL, thou enlighten'd globe of human joy!
Where ſocial cares the ſoften'd heart employ:
What cheering rays of vital comfort roll
In thy bright regions o'er the reſcued ſoul,
Which, 'ſcaping from the dark domain of Spleen,
Springs with new warmth to thy attractive ſcene!
Once more I bleſs thy pleaſure-breathing gale,
And gaze enchanted on thy flowery vale,
Where ſmiling innocence, and ardent youth,
Sport hand in hand with beauty and with truth.
Sport on, ſweet revellers! in roſy bowers,
Safe from th' intruſion of all evil powers!
Ah fruitleſs wiſh of the benignant Muſe,
Which to this chequer'd world the Fates refuſe!
For round its precincts many an ugly ſprite
Speeds undiſcern'd to poiſon pure delight:

Amidſt

Amidſt the foremoſt of this haggard band,
Unwearied poſter of the ſea and land,
Wrapt in dark miſts, malignant Scandal flies,
While Envy's poiſon'd breath the buoyant gale ſupplies.
Tho' SHERIDAN, with ſhafts of comic wit,
Pierc'd, and expos'd her to the laughing pit,
Th' immortal hag ſtill wears her paper crown,
The dreaded empreſs of the idle town:
O'erleaping her prerogative of old,
To ſink the noble, to defame the bold;—
In chaſe of worth to ſlip the dogs of ſtrife,
Thro' all the ample range of public life;—
The tyrant now, that ſanctuary burſt
Where happineſs by privacy is nurſt,
Her fury riſing as her powers encreaſe,
O'erturns the altars of domeſtic peace.
Pleas'd in her dark and gall-diſtilling cloud
The ſportive form of innocence to ſhroud,
Beauty's young train her baleful eyes ſurvey,
To mark the faireſt, as her favourite prey.

Hence,

Hence, ſweet SERENA, while thy ſpirit ſtray'd
Round the deep realms of ſubterranean ſhade,
This keeneſt agent of th' infernal powers
On earth was buſied, in thoſe tranquil hours,
To blaſt thy peace, and poiſon'd darts to aim
Againſt the honour of thy ſpotleſs name:
For Scandal, reſtleſs fiend, who never knows
The balmy bleſſing of an hour's repoſe,
Worn, yet unſated with her daily toil,
In her baſe work conſumes the midnight oil.
O'er fiercer fiends when heavy ſlumbers creep,
When wearied avarice and ambition ſleep,
Scandal is vigilant, and keen to ſpread
The plagues that ſpring from her prolific head.
On truth's fair baſis ſhe her falſehood builds,
With tinſel ſentiment its ſurface gilds;
To nightly labour from their dark abodes
The demons of the groaning preſs ſhe goads,
And ſmiles to ſee their rapid art ſupply
Ten thouſand wings to every infant lie.

In triumph now behold the hag applaud
Her keen and fav'rite imp, ingenious Fraud,
Her quick compoſitor, whoſe flying hand
Has clos'd the paragraph ſhe keenly plann'd.
No nymph ſhe nam'd, yet mark'd her vile intent,
That dulneſs could not miſs the name ſhe meant:
In ſatire's tints the injur'd fair ſhe drew,
In form an angel, but in ſoul a Jew.

It chanc'd her ſire among his friends inroll'd
A wealthy ſenator, infirm and old;
Who, dup'd too early by a generous heart,
Raſhly aſſum'd a miſanthropic part:
Tho' peeviſh fancies would his mind incruſt,
Good-nature's image lurk'd beneath their ruſt;
And gay SERENA, with that ſportive wit
Which heals the folly that it deigns to hit,
Would oft the ſickneſs of his ſoul beguile,
And teach the ſullen humoriſt to ſmile;
Pleas'd by her virtuous frolics to aſſuage
The mental anguiſh of diſtemper'd age.

This

This ancient friend, in a ſarcaſtic ſketch,
Was mark'd by Scandal as a monied wretch,
For whom the young, yet mercenary fair
Had ſubtly ſpread a matrimonial ſnare.
With ſuch baſe matter more diffuſely wrought,
The ſpirit-piercing paragraph was fraught,
O'er which with glee the eye of Scandal glar'd,
Which for the opening preſs herſelf prepar'd;
She on the types her inky wad let fall,
And ſmear'd each letter with her bittereſt gall;
The preſs, whoſe ready gripe the charge receives,
Stamps it ſucceſſive on ten thouſand leaves,
Which pil'd in heaps impatient ſeem to lie,
They only wait the dawn of day to fly.

Now, as the child, in lonely chamber laid,
Mute in the dark, and of itſelf afraid,
When, haply conſcious of the pain it feels,
The watchful mother to its pillow ſteals,
Springs to her breaſt, and ſhakes off all alarms,
Feeling its ſafety in her foſtering arms:

With ſuch quick joy, in innocence as young,
The ſoft SERENA from her pillow ſprung,
Pleas'd to awake from her terrific dream,
And feel the chearful ſun's returning beam.
Eager ſhe roſe, in buſy thought, nor ſtaid
The wonted ſummons of her punctual maid,
And as her own fair hands adjuſt her veſt,
The guardian cincture flutters on her breaſt;
For fondly, when ſhe wak'd, or when ſhe ſlept,
Still round her heart th' important zone ſhe kept.
Thou happy girdle! to thy charge be juſt!
Firm be thy threads, and faithful to their truſt;
For hours approach, when all the ſtores they hide
Of magic virtue, muſt be ſtrongly tried!—
Now, while her kind domeſtic heart intends
To pleaſe her early ſire, the nymph deſcends;
But ſleep, who left the fair with ſudden flight,
With late wings hover'd o'er the good old knight;
And the chill circle of the lone ſaloon
Informs the ſhiv'ring maid ſhe roſe too ſoon.

'Tis

'Tis true, attentive John's unfailing care
Began the rites of breakfaſt to prepare;
But yet no fires on the cold altar burn,
No ſmoke ariſes from the ſilver urn,
And the blank tea-board, where no viands lay,
Only ſupplied the paper of the day.

Tho' mild SERENA's peace-devoted mind
The keen debate of politics declin'd,
And heard with cold contempt, or generous hate,
The frauds of party and the lies of ſtate;
Nor car'd much more for faſhion's looſe intrigues,
Than factious bickerings or foreign leagues;
Yet, while ſhe ſaunters idle and alone,
Her careleſs eyes are on the paper thrown.

As ſome gay youth, whom ſportive friends engage
To view the furious ourang in his cage,
If while amus'd he ſees the monſter grin,
And truſts too careleſs to the bolts within,
If the ſly beaſt, as near the grate he draws,
Tear him unguarded with projected paws,

Starts at the wound, and feels his boſom thrill
With pain and wonder at the ſudden ill:
So did SERENA ſtart, ſo wildly gaze,
In ſuch mixt pangs of anguiſh and amaze,
Feeling the wound which Scandal had deſign'd
To lacerate her mild and modeſt mind.
Startled, as one who from electric wire
Unheeding catches unſuſpected fire,
She reads, then almoſt doubts that ſhe has read,
And thinks ſome viſion hovers round her head.
Now, her fixt eye ſome ſtriking words confine,
And now ſhe darts it thrice thro' every line;
Nor could amazement more her ſenſes ſhake,
Had every letter been a gorgon's ſnake.
Now riſing indignation takes its turn,
And her fluſh'd cheeks with tingling bluſhes burn,
With reſtleſs motion and with many a frown,
Thro' the wide room ſhe paces up and down:
Now, muſing, makes a momentary ſtand,
The fatal paper fluttering in her hand.

So

So the ſhy bird, by cruel ſportſmen ſprung,
And by their random fire ſeverely ſtung,
Scar'd, not diſabled, by the diſtant wound,
Now trembling flies, now ſkims along the ground,
Now vainly tries, in ſome ſequeſter'd ſpot,
From her gor'd breaſt to ſhake the galling ſhot.

Ye tender nymphs! whoſe kindling ſouls would flame,
Touch'd, like SERENA's, by injurious blame,
O let your quick and kindred ſpirits form
A vivid picture of the mental ſtorm
In which ſhe labour'd, and whoſe force to paint
The Muſe's ſtrongeſt tints appear too faint;
In ſympathetic thought her ſuffering ſee!
But O, for ever from ſuch wrongs be free!

Her faithful girdle try'd its power to ſave,
And oft a monitory impulſe gave;
Still unregarded, ſtill unfelt, it preſt
With uſeleſs energy her heaving breaſt,
Her mind, forgetful of the magic zone,
Full of the burning ſhaft by Scandal thrown,

With blended notes of ſorrow and diſdain,
Thus in diſorder'd language vents its pain:—
"Had malice dar'd my honour to defame,
The ſelf-refuted lie had loſt its aim:
But here the world, deceiv'd by ſland'rous art,
Muſt think SERENA has a venal heart."
A venal heart! at that deteſted ſound,
In ſwelling anguiſh her ſunk voice was drown'd.
Now was a fearful criſis of her fate:
Diſtended now by paſſion's growing weight,
And for its miſtreſs fill'd with conſcious dread,
The magic girdle crack'd thro' every thread,
And ſnapp'd perchance by Scandal's force accurſt,
From her full heart the guardian zone had burſt,
And, ſpite of all the virtues of the fair,
The ſpell of happineſs had ſunk in air,
But that SOPHROSYNE, whoſe friendly fear
Timely foreſaw this trial too ſevere,
An early ſuccour gain'd from ſecret love,
From the fell kite to ſnatch the falling dove.

As

As Nature ſtudies, in her wide domain,
To blend ſome antidote with every bane;
Thus her kind aid the friendly power contriv'd,
That, from the quarter whence the wound arriv'd,
There flow'd, the anguiſh of that wound to calm,
A ſoothing, ſoft, and medicinal balm.
As in her agitated hand the fair
Wav'd the looſe paper with diſorder'd air,
In capitals ſhe ſaw SERENA flame:
She bluſh'd, ſhe ſhudder'd, as ſhe view'd the name;
Her ready fears ſubſide in new ſurpriſe,
And eager thus ſhe reads with lighten'd eyes:

"Go, faithful ſonnet, to SERENA ſay
What charms peculiar in her features reign:
A ſtranger, whom her glance may ne'er ſurvey,
Pays her this tribute in no flattering ſtrain.
Tell her, the bard, in beauty's wide domain,
Has ſeen a virgin cheek as richly glow,
A boſom,

A boſom, where the blue meandring vein
Sheds as ſoft luſtre thro' the lucid ſnow,
Eyes, that as brightly flaſh with joy and youth,
And locks, that like her own luxuriant flow:
Then ſay, for then ſhe cannot doubt thy truth,
That the wide earth no female form can ſhow
Where nature's legend ſo diſtinctly tells,
In this fair ſhrine a fairer ſpirit dwells."

With curious wonder the reviving maid
View'd this fond homage to her beauty paid;
A ſecond glance o'er every line ſhe caſt,
And half pronounc'd and half ſuppreſs'd the laſt,
While modeſt pleaſure, and ingenuous pride,
Her burning cheek with deeper crimſon dy'd.
O Praiſe! thy language was by heaven deſign'd
As manna to the faint bewilder'd mind:
Beauty and diffidence, whoſe hearts rejoice
In the kind comfort of thy cheering voice,

In

Stothard del. Sharp Sculp.

London Published Sept.r 1.st 1788. by T. Cadell Strand.

In this wild wood of life, wert thou not nigh,
Muſt, like the wandering babes, lie down and die:
But thy ſweet accents wake new vital powers,
And make this thorny path a path of flowers:
As oil on ocean's troubled waters ſpread,
Smooths the rough billow to a level bed,
The ſoothing rhyme thus ſoften'd into reſt
The painful tumult of SERENA's breaſt.

Now, to herſelf reſtor'd, the conſcious maid
The lurking fiend's inſidious ſnare ſurvey'd;
Her nerves, with grateful trepidation, own
A ſlighter preſſure from the faithful zone;
And in fond thought ſhe breathes a thankful prayer
For her ætherial guardian's conſtant care;
Yet with a keen deſire her boſom glow'd,
To hear from whom the gentle ſonnet flow'd;
But kind SOPHROSYNE, who watch'd unſeen,
To ſhield her votary from the wiles of Spleen,
As friendly love had fixt a future time,
When to reveal the ſecret of the rhyme,

Strove

Strove till that hour her fancy to reſtrain,
Nor let her anxious wiſhes riſe to pain.
As gaiety's freſh tide began to roll,
Faſt in the ſwelling channel of her ſoul,
The good old knight deſcends, tho' eager, ſlow,
The gout ſtill tingling in his tender toe;
And now, paternal ſalutations paſt,
His eyes he keenly on the paper caſt,
While his ſweet daughter, with attentive grace,
Before him flies his ready cup to place;
For tea and politics alternate ſhare,
In friendly rivalſhip, his morning care.
Tho' ſmooth as oil the knight's good-humour flows,
When the mild breeze of pleaſant fortune blows,
Yet, quick to catch the caſual ſparks of ire,
Like oil it kindles into mounting fire;
And fiercely now his flaming ſpirit blaz'd,
While on thoſe galling words he wildly gaz'd,
Whoſe force had almoſt work'd into a ſtorm
The gentler elements in beauty's form.

As

As the ſarcaſtic ſentence caught his view,
Back from the board his elbow-chair he drew,
And, by ſharp ſtings of ſudden fury prick'd,
Far from his foot his gouty ſtool he kick'd.
Fierce as Achilles, by Atrides ſtung,
He pour'd the ſtream of vengeance from his tongue.
But ah, thoſe angry threats he deign'd to ſpeak,
Had ſounds, alas! far differing from the Greek.
Rage from his lips in legal language broke;
Of juries and of damages he ſpoke,
And on the printer's law-devoted head
He threaten'd deep revenge in terms moſt dread;
Terms, that with pain the ear of beauty pierce,
And oaths too rough to harmonize in verſe.

While thus the good old knight, with paſſion hot,
His toaſt neglected, and his tea forgot,
The diſcord of the drama to increaſe,
Now prim PENELOPE aſſails her niece;
For, as SIR GILBERT now, with choler dumb,
Points her the period with his angry thumb,

"Ah!

" Ah! brother," cries the ſtiff, malignant crone,
(Her ſharp eye ſwiftly thro' the ſentence thrown)
" Scandal could never riſe to heights like this,
But from the manners of each modern miſs;
Had but my niece, leſs giddy and more grave,
Obſerv'd the prudent hints I often gave ——"
The honeſt knight her vile concluſion ſaw,
And quick curtail'd it with a teſty " Pſhaw!"
Mean while the gentle maid, who heard the taunt,
Survey'd without a frown her prudiſh aunt:
Far other thoughts employ'd her ſofter mind,
To one ſweet purpoſe all her ſoul inclin'd;
How ſhe might cloſe th' unpleaſant ſcene, how beſt
Reſtore good-humour to her father's breaſt.
Her airy guardian with delight ſurvey'd
Theſe tender wiſhes in the lovely maid,
And, to accompliſh what her heart deſir'd,
Trains of new thought above her age inſpir'd.
As Venus on her ſon's enlighten'd face
Shed richer charms, and more attractive grace,

When,

When, iſſuing forth from the diſſolving cloud,
His bright form burſt on the admiring crowd:
So kind SOPHROSYNE, unſeen, ſupplies
A livelier radiance to SERENA's eyes;
And, ere ſhe ſpeaks, to captivate her ſire,
Touches her lips with patriotic fire.

It chanc'd, that, toſs'd upon a vacant chair,
A volume of that wit lay near the fair,
Whoſe value, try'd by faſhion's varying touch,
Once roſe too high, and now is ſunk too much;
The book, which fortune plac'd within her reach,
Contain'd, O CHESTERFIELD, the liberal ſpeech
In which thy ſpirit, like an Attic ſage,
Strove to defend the violated ſtage
From fetters baſely forg'd by miniſterial rage.
From this the nymph her uſeful leſſon took,
And thus began, reclining on the book:—
"If on this noble lord we may rely,
Scandal is but a ſpeck on Freedom's eye;

And

And public ſpirit, then, will rather bear
The caſual pain it gives by growing there,
Than, by a raſh attempt to move it thence,
Hazard the ſafety of a precious ſenſe,
And, by the efforts of a vain deſire,
Rob this life-darting eye of all its fire.
Tho' the ſoft breaſt of innocence may ſmart,
By cruel calumny's corroding dart,
Yet would ſhe rather ache in every nerve,
And bear thoſe pangs ſhe knows not to deſerve,
Much rather than be made a ſenſeleſs tool,
To aid the frenzy of tyrannic rule,
Or forge one dangerous bolt for power to aim
At ſacred Liberty's ſuperior frame."——

As ancient chiefs were wont of old to gaze,
With eyes of tender awe and fond amaze
On the fair prieſteſs of the Delphic fane,
When firſt ſhe utter'd her prophetic ſtrain,
Entranc'd in wonder, thus SIR GILBERT view'd
His child, yet more inſpir'd, who thus purſu'd:

" For

" For me, I own, theſe lines, with gall replete,
Shot thro' my ſimple heart a ſudden heat;
But happier thoughts my riſing rage repreſt,
And turn'd the pointleſs inſult to a jeſt:
And O! ſhould Slander ſtill new wrath awake,
Still may my father, for his daughter's ſake,
Diſdain the vengeance of litigious ſtrife,
And let SERENA's anſwer be—her life!"

She ended with a ſmile, whoſe magic flame
Shot youthful vigour thro' her father's frame:
His age, his anger, and his gout, are fled;
" Enchanting girl!" with tears of joy, he ſaid,
" Enchanting girl!" twice echoed from his tongue,
As, ſpeaking, from his elbow-chair he ſprung,
" Come to thy father's arms!—By Heaven, thou art
His own true offspring, and a Whig in heart."

He ſpoke; and his fond arms around her curl'd
With proud graſp, ſeeming to infold the world.
Her conſcious heart ſhe feels with triumph beat,
And joys to find that triumph is compleat;

For ſtiff PENELOPE, who near them ſtood,
" Albeit unuſed to the melting mood,"
Squeez'd from her eye-lid one reluctant tear,
And ſoften'd with a ſmile her brow ſevere;
But 'twas a ſmile of ſuch a gloomy grace,
As lighten'd once upon Alecto's face,
When Orpheus paſt her, leading back to life,
From Pluto's regions, his recover'd wife,
When love connubial, join'd to muſic's ſpell,
Moiſten'd with tender joy the eyes of hell.
Far other ſmiles, with pleaſure's ſofteſt air,
Gild the gay features of the youthful fair:
She looks like ſportive Spring, when her young charms
Wind round her hoary ſire's reluctant arms,
And, by a frolic infantine embrace,
Baniſh the rugged frown from Winter's face.
Thro' the long day ſhe felt the glowing tide
Of exultation thro' her boſom glide;
And oft ſhe wiſh'd for ſlow-approaching night,
To hold ſweet converſe with her guardian ſprite.

At

At length the hour approach'd her heart deſir'd,
And, in her lonely chamber now retir'd,
Her tender fancy gave the fondeſt ſcope
To ardent gratitude and eager hope.
" Dear airy being !" (the ſoft nymph exclaim'd)
" Whoſe power can break the ſpell that Spleen has fram'd,
Can, by the waving of thy viewleſs wing,
O'er darkeſt forms a golden radiance fling,
And make, in minds by ſorrieſt thoughts perplext,
This moment's grief the triumph of the next;
I bleſs thy ſuccour in each trial paſt;
Be preſent ſtill, and ſave me in the laſt !"
Thus, with her lovely eyes devoutly fixt,
Where rays of hope, and fear, and reverence mixt,
The tender fair her faithful guard addreſt,
Then with her cheek her downy pillow preſt;
But long her wakeful lids refuſe to cloſe,
For curioſity diſpels repoſe.
Her buſy mind the myſtic veil would pierce,
That hides the author of the pleaſing verſe;

Her lips involuntary catch the chime,
And half articulate the ſoothing rhyme,
Till weary thought no longer watch can keep,
But ſinks reluctant in the folds of ſleep.

END OF THE FOURTH CANTO.

CANTO V.

WHY art thou fled, O bleſt poetic time,
When Fancy wrought the miracles of rhyme;
When, darting from her ſtar-encircled throne,
Her poet's eye commanded worlds unknown;
When, by her fiat made a mimic god,
He ſaw exiſtence waiting on his nod,
And at his pleaſure into being brought
New ſhadowy hoſts, the vaſſals of his thought,
In joy's gay garb, in terror's dread array,
Darker than night, and brighter than the day;
Who, at his bidding, thro' the wilds of air,
Rais'd willing mortals far from earthly care,
And led them wondering thro' his wide domain,
Beyond the bounds of nature's narrow reign;
While their rapt ſpirits, in the various flight,
Shook with ſucceſſive thrills of new delight?

Return, ſweet ſeaſon, grac'd with fiction's flowers,
Let not cold ſyſtem cramp thy genial powers!
Shall mild Morality, in garb uncouth,
The houſewife garb of plain and homely truth,
Robb'd by ſtern Method of her roſy crown,
Chill her faint votaries by a wintry frown?
No; thou ſweet friend of man, as ſuits thee beſt,
Shine forth in Fable's rich-embroider'd veſt!
O make my verſe thy vehicle, thy arms,
To ſpread o'er ſocial life thy potent charms!
And thou, SOPHROSYNE, myſterious ſprite!
If haply I may trace thy ſteps aright,
Roving thro' paths untrod by mortal feet,
To paint for human eyes thy heavenly ſeat,
Shed on my ſoul ſome portion of that power,
Which ſav'd SERENA in the trying hour,
To bear thoſe trials, which, however hard,
As bards all tell us, may befall the bard;
The fop's pert jeſt, the critic's frown ſevere,
Learning's proud cant, with envy's artful ſneer,

And,

And, the vext poet's laſt and worſt diſgrace,
His cold blank bookſeller's rhyme-freezing face.
Hence! ye dark omens, that to Spleen belong,
Ye ſhall not check the current of my ſong,
While Beauty's lovely race, for whom I ſing,
Fire my warm hand to ſtrike the ready ſtring.
As quiet now her lighteſt mantle laid
O'er the ſtill ſenſes of the ſleeping maid,
Her nightly viſitant, her faithful guide,
Deſcends in all her empyrean pride;
That fairy ſhape no more ſhe deigns to wear,
Whoſe light foot ſmooths the furrow plough'd by care
In mortal faces, while her tiny ſpear
Gives a kind tingle to the caution'd ear.
Now, in her nobler ſhape, of heavenly ſize,
She ſtrikes her votary's ſoul with new ſurpriſe.
Jove's favourite daughter, arm'd in all his powers,
Appear'd leſs brilliant to th' attending Hours,
When, on the golden car of Juno rais'd,
In heavenly pomp the queen of battles blaz'd:

With all her luſtre, but without the dread
Which from her arm the frowning gorgon ſhed,
SOPHROSYNE deſcends, with guardian love,
To waft her gentle ward to worlds above.
From her fair brow a radiant diadem
Roſe in twelve ſtars, and every ſeparate gem
Shot magic rays, of virtue to controul
Some paſſion hoſtile to the human ſoul.
Round her ſweet form a robe of æther flow'd,
And in a wonderous car the ſmiling Spirit rode;
Firm as pure ivory, it charm'd the ſight
With finer poliſh and a ſofter white.
The hand of beauty, with an eaſy ſwell,
Scoop'd the free concave like a bending ſhell;
And on its rich exterior, art diſplay'd
The triumphs of the Power the car convey'd.
Here, in celeſtial tints, ſurpaſſing life,
Sate lovely Gentleneſs, diſarming Strife;
There, young Affection, born of tender Thought,
In roſy chains the fiercer paſſions caught;

Ambition,

Ambition, with his ſceptre ſnapt in twain,
And Avarice, ſcorning what his cheſts contain.
Round the tame vulture flies the fearleſs dove;
Soft Innocence embraces playful Love;
And laughing Sport, the frolic child of Air,
Buries in flowers the ſinking form of Care.

Theſe figures, pencil'd with a touch ſo light,
That every image ſeem'd an heavenly ſprite,
Breathe on the car; whoſe ſight-enchanting frame
Four wheels ſuſtain, of pale and purple flame;
For no fleet animals, to earth unknown,
Bear thro' ætherial fields this flying throne.
As by the ſubtle electrician's ſkill,
Globes ſeem to fly, obedient to his will;
So theſe four circles of inſtinctive fire
Move by the impulſe of their queen's deſire,
Mount or deſcend by her directing care,
Or reſt, ſupported by the buoyant air.

Now, ſpringing from her car, that hovering ſtaid
High in the chamber of the ſleeping maid,

The

The goddeſs, with a voice divinely clear,
Breath'd theſe kind accents in her votary's ear :—
" Come, my fair champion, who ſo well haſt fought
The uſeful battles of contentious thought ;
To aid thy gentle ſpirit to ſuſtain
The final conflict of thy deſtin'd pain,
View the rewards that, in my realms of bliſs,
Wait the ſweet victor in ſuch war as this !
So haply may thy mind, with ſtrength renew'd,
The dark devices of the fiend elude ;
By one bleſt effort ſeal thy triumphs paſt,
And gain thy promis'd guerdon in the laſt."
As thus ſhe ſpake, her heavenly arms embrac'd,
And in the car the conſcious maiden plac'd.
Quick at her wiſh the flaming wheels aſcend,
No clouds impede them, whereſoe'er they bend.
As thro' the empire of the winds they ruſh'd,
The winds were all in mute ſubmiſſion huſh'd :
And now SERENA, from th' exalted car,
Look'd down, aſtoniſh'd, on each ſinking ſtar ;

Flying

Flying o'er lucid orbs, whoſe diſtant light
Yet has not reach'd the ſcope of human ſight;
And now, not diſtant from the bounds of ſpace,
The guardian ſprite ſuſpends their rapid race;
And, while in deep amaze the nymph admires
The circling meteors' inoffenſive fires,
Pleas'd at her wonder, the mild power addreſt,
With kind intelligence, her earthly gueſt:—
" Of thoſe three orbs, that in yon cryſtal ſphere
A ſeparate ſyſtem in themſelves appear,
The laſt, whoſe luminous and ſteady form
Shines ſoftly bright, and moderately warm,
Contains my palace, and the gentle train
Whom I have wafted to this pure domain.
At equal diſtance my dominions lie
From theſe two larger worlds, more near thine eye:
Obſerve their difference as our wheels advance,
And paſſing, take of each a tranſient glance."
So ſpeaking, to the groſſer globe ſhe ſprung,
Her car ſuſpended o'er its ſurface hung,

In heavy air; for round this orb was roll'd
A circling vapour, dull, and damp, and cold.
"Here," ſays SOPHROSYNE, "thoſe beings dwell,
Who wanted ſoul to act or ill or well;
Who ſaunter'd thoughtleſs thro' their mortal time,
Without a care, a virtue, or a crime;
Here ſtill they ſaunter, in this languid ſcene:
But paſs the dozing crowd, and mark their queen."
And now, ſlow riding on a tortoiſe' back,
Her features lifeleſs, and each fibre ſlack,
Full in their view the nymph Indifference came;
The quick SERENA ſoon perceiv'd her name;
For, as in ſolemn creeping ſtate ſhe rode,
In her lax hand ſhe held fair GREVILLE'S ode.
Ne'er did the muſe from her ſweet treaſure cull
Incenſe ſo precious for a Power ſo dull.
Still, as ſhe mov'd along her even way,
The heavy goddeſs try'd to read the lay;
But at each pauſe her inattentive eye
Stray'd from the paper, which ſhe held awry;

Nor

Nor could her lips a ſingle line repeat,
Tho' the ſoft verſe, moſt raviſhingly ſweet,
Thro' Time's juſt ear will laſting pleaſure ſpread,
And charm the poppy from Oblivion's head.
Thus, like a city mayor, whoſe heavy barge
Steers its dull progreſs at the public charge,
This Power, ſo cumber'd by her empire's weight,
Makes her ſlow circuit round her ſluggiſh ſtate.
Around her, tribes of rambling ſceptics crawl,
Tho' moving, dubious if they move at all.
Before her, languid Pomp, her marſhal, creeps,
Whoſe hand her banner half unfolded keeps:
Its quaint device her dull dominion ſpoke—
An eagle, numb'd by the torpedo's ſtroke.
"Enough of ſcenes ſo foreign to thy ſoul,"
SOPHROSYNE exclaim'd; "from this dark goal
Paſs we to regions oppoſite to this."
She ſpoke; and, darting o'er the wide abyſs;
Her car, like lightning in ſoft flaſhes hurl'd,
Shot to the confines of a clearer world.

Now

Now lovelier views the virgin's mind abſorb;
For now they hover'd o'er a lucid orb.
Here the ſoft air, luxuriantly warm,
Imparts new luſtre to SERENA's form:
Her eyes with more expreſſive radiance ſpeak,
And richer roſes open on her cheek.
Here, as ſhe gaz'd, ſhe felt in every vein
A blended thrill of pleaſure and of pain;
Yet every object glittering in her view,
Her quick regard with ſoft attraction drew.
SOPHROSYNE, who ſaw the gentle fair
Lean o'er theſe confines with peculiar care,
Smil'd at the tender intereſt ſhe diſplay'd,
And ſpoke regardful of the penſive maid:
"Well may'ſt thou bend o'er this congenial ſphere;
For Senſibility is ſovereign here.
Thou ſeeſt her train of ſprightly damſels ſport,
Where the ſoft ſpirit holds her rural court;
But fix thine eye attentive to the plain,
And mark the varying wonders of her reign."

As

As thus ſhe ſpoke, ſhe pois'd her airy ſeat
High o'er a plain exhaling every ſweet;
For round its precincts all the flowers that bloom
Fill'd the delicious air with rich perfume;
And in the midſt a verdant throne appear'd,
In ſimpleſt form by graceful fancy rear'd,
And deck'd with flowers; not ſuch whoſe flaunting dyes
Strike with the ſtrongeſt tint our dazzled eyes;
But thoſe wild herbs that tendereſt fibres bear,
And ſhun th' approaches of a damper air.
Here ſtood the lovely ruler of the ſcene,
And beauty, more than pomp, announc'd the queen.
The bending ſnow-drop, and the briar-roſe,
The ſimple circle of her crown compoſe;
Roſes of every hue her robe adorn,
Except th' inſipid roſe without a thorn.
Thro' her thin veſt her heighten'd beauties ſhine;
For earthly gauze was never half ſo fine.
Of that enchanting age her figure ſeems,
When ſmiling nature with the vital beams

Of vivid youth, and pleaſure's purple flame,
Gilds her accompliſh'd work, the female frame,
With rich luxuriance tender, ſweetly wild,
And juſt between the woman and the child.
Her fair left arm around a vaſe ſhe flings,
From which the tender plant mimoſa ſprings:
Towards its leaves, o'er which ſhe fondly bends,
The youthful fair her vacant hand extends
With gentle motion, anxious to ſurvey
How far the feeling fibres own her ſway:
The leaves, as conſcious of their queen's command,
Succeſſive fall at her approaching hand;
While her ſoft breaſt with pity ſeems to pant,
And ſhrinks at every ſhrinking of the plant.
Around their ſovereign, on the verdant ground,
Sweet airy forms in myſtic meaſures bound.
The mighty maſter of the revel, Love,
In notes more ſoothing than his mother's dove,
Prompts the ſoft ſtrain that melting virgins ſing,
Or ſportive trips around the frolic ring,

Coupling,

Stothard del. Neagle sculp.

Published as the Act directs by T. Cadell, Strand, Feb.y 1st 1788.

Coupling, with radiant wreaths of lambent fire,
Fair fluttering Hope and rapturous Deſire.
Unnumber'd damſels different charms diſplay,
Penſive with bliſs, or in their pleaſures gay;
And the wide proſpect yields one touching ſight
Of tender, yet diverſified delight.
But, the bright triumphs of their joy to check,
In the clear air there hangs a duſky ſpeck;
It ſwells—it ſpreads—and rapid, as it grows,
O'er the gay ſcene a chilling ſhadow throws.
The ſoft SERENA, who beheld its flight,
Suſpects no evil from a cloud ſo light;
For harmleſs round her the thin vapours wreath,
Not hiding from her view the ſcene beneath;
But ah! too ſoon, with pity's tender pain,
She ſaw its dire effect o'er all the plain:
Sudden from thence the ſounds of anguiſh flow,
And joy's ſweet carols end in ſhrieks of woe:
The wither'd flowers are fall'n, that bloom'd ſo fair,
And poiſon all the peſtilential air.

From the rent earth dark demons force their way,
And make the ſportive revellers their prey.
Here gloomy Terror, with a ſhadowy rope,
Seems, like a Turkiſh mute, to ſtrangle Hope;
There jealous Fury drowns in blood the fire
That ſparkled in the eye of young Deſire;
And lifeleſs Love lets mercileſs Deſpair
From his cruſh'd frame his bleeding pinions tear.
But pangs more cruel, more intenſely keen,
Wound and diſtract their ſympathetic queen:
With fruitleſs tears ſhe o'er their miſery bends;
From her ſweet brow the thorny roſe ſhe rends,
And, bow'd by grief's inſufferable weight,
Frantic ſhe curſes her immortal ſtate:
The ſoft SERENA, as this curſe ſhe hears,
Feels her bright eye ſuffus'd with kindred tears;
And her kind breaſt, where quick compaſſion ſwell'd,
Shar'd in each bitter ſuffering ſhe beheld.
The guardian Power ſurvey'd her lovely grief,
And ſpoke in gentle terms of mild relief:

"For

" For this ſoft tribe thy heavieſt fear diſmiſs,
And know their pains are tranſient as their bliſs:
Rapture and agony, in nature's loom,
Have form'd the changing tiſſue of their doom;
Both interwoven with ſo nice an art,
No power can tear the twiſted threads apart:
Yet happier theſe, to Nature's heart more dear,
Than the dull offspring in the torpid ſphere,
Where her warm wiſhes, and affections kind,
Loſe their bright current in the ſtagnant mind.
Here grief and joy ſo ſuddenly unite,
That anguiſh ſerves to ſublimate delight."

She ſpoke; and, ere SERENA could reply,
The vapour vaniſh'd from the lucid ſky;
The nymphs revive, the ſhadowy fiends are fled,
The new-born flowers a richer fragrance ſhed;
The gentle ruler of the changeful land,
Smiling, reſum'd her ſymbol of command;
Replac'd the roſes of her regal wreath,
Still trembling at the thorns that lurk beneath:

But, to her wounded ſubjects quick to pay
The tender duties of imperial ſway,
Their wants ſhe ſuccour'd, they her wiſh obey'd,
And all recover'd, by alternate aid;
While, on the lovely queen's enchanting face,
Departed ſorrow's faint and fainter trace,
Gave to each touching charm a more attractive grace.
Now, laughing Sport, from the enlighten'd plain,
Clear'd with quick foot the veſtiges of pain;
The gay ſcene grows more beautifully bright,
Than when it firſt allur'd SERENA's ſight,
Still her fond eyes o'er all the proſpect range,
Flaſhing ſweet pleaſure at the bliſsful change:
Her curious thoughts with fond attachment burn,
Yet more of this engaging land to learn.
She finds the chief attendants of the queen,
Sweet females, wafted from our human ſcene;
But, as it chanc'd, while all the realm reviv'd,
A ſpirit maſculine from earth arriv'd:

Two airy guides conduct the gentle ſhade;
Genius, in robes of braided flames array'd,
And a fantaſtic nymph, in manners nice,
Profuſely deck'd with many an odd device;
Siſter of him, whoſe luminous attire
Flaſhes with unextinguiſhable fire;
Like him in features, in her look as wild,
And Singularity by mortals ſtyl'd.
The eager queen, and all her ſmiling court,
Surround the welcome ſhade in gentle ſport;
For in their new aſſociate all rejoice,
All pant to hear the accents of his voice.
Tho' o'er his frame th' Armenian robe was flung,
The pleaſing ſtranger ſpoke the Gallic tongue;
But in that language his enchanting art
Inſpir'd new energy, that ſeiz'd the heart;
In terms ſo eloquent, ſo ſweetly bold,
A ſtory of diſaſtrous love he told,
Convuls'd with ſympathy, the liſt'ning train,
At every pauſe, with dear delicious pain,
Intreat him to renew the faſcinating ſtrain.

And now SERENA, with ſuſpended breath,
Liſten'd, and caught the tale of Julia's death;
And quick ſhe cries, ere tears had time to flow,
"Bleſt be this hour! for now I ſee Rouſſeau."
Fondly ſhe gaz'd, till the enchanting ſound
In ſuch a potent ſpell her ſpirit bound,
That, loſt in ſweet illuſion, ſhe forgot
The promis'd ſcenes of the ſublimer ſpot;
Till now her mild remembrancer, whoſe care
Stray'd not a moment from the mortal fair,
Rous'd her rapt mind, preparing her to meet
The brighter wonders of her bliſsful ſeat;
While her inſtinctive car's obedient frame
Now upward roſe, like undulating flame.

As when ſome victor on the watery world,
Bright honour gilding all his ſails unfurl'd,
Steers into port, while to the laughing ſky
His ſtreamers tell his triumph as they fly;
Expecting thouſands line the crowded ſtrand,
Swell the glad voice, or wave the joyous hand,

Preſſing

Preſſing to view the ſight their vows implor'd,
And hail their glory and their ſtrength reſtor'd:
So the bleſt beings of this ſmiling ſcene
Flock'd round the car of their returning queen.
The radiant car, from which they now alight,
Careful ſhe gives to a ſelected ſprite,
A nymph of ſnowy veſt and lovely frame,
Fidelity her fair and ſpotleſs name;
Then, happy to review her hallow'd home,
Leads her ſweet gueſt to her celeſtial dome.

Gentleſt of powers! for every purpoſe fit,
To ſtrengthen wiſdom, and embelliſh wit;—
Thou, whoſe ſoft arts, poſſeſs'd by thee alone,
Can give to virtue's voice a ſweeter tone;
Allay the froſt of age, or fire of youth,
And lend attraction to ſevereſt truth;
Improve e'en beauty by thy graceful eaſe,
Or teach deformity herſelf to pleaſe;—
Inſpire the bard, whoſe juſt ambition pants
To guide weak mortals to thy heavenly haunts!

Grant him, in notes that, like thy ſoft controul,
Allure attention, and poſſeſs the ſoul;
Grant him to ſhow, in luminous diſplay,
The myſtic wonders of thy ſecret ſway!
Now, at the ſight of the preſiding power,
Wide ſpread the gates of a ſtupendous tower,
On whoſe firm height, commanding nature's bound,
The faithful warder of the fort they found,
Wakeful Intelligence, a truſty ſprite,
Whoſe eyes are piercing as the ſolar light,
And ever on the watch to ſound alarm,
If aught of duſky hue, portending harm,
Should, in defiance of her mandate, dare
Approach the palace of th' imperial fair.
Within his ward, magnificently great,
Lies the rich armoury that guards her ſtate.
Here ſtands Conviction's ſtrong and lucid ſpear,
Whoſe touch annihilates ſuſpence and fear;
Here, Truth's unſullied adamantine ſhield,
Which, ſave SOPHROSYNE, no power can wield;

And

And Reaſon's trenchant blade of blazing ſteel,
Its edge and poliſh form'd by friendly zeal;
And, not leſs ſure their deſtin'd mark to hit,
Pointed by virtue's hand, the ſhafts of Wit;
And Ridicule's ſtrong bolt, whoſe ſtunning blow
Lays towering vice and fearleſs folly low.
Here too the goddeſs kept, in myſtic ſtate,
Thoſe ſweet rewards that on her champions wait,
Guerdons more precious than triumphant palms:—
The glance of gratitude for mental alms,
Peace's ſoft kiſs, and reconcilement's tear,
And ſmiles of ſympathy, are treaſur'd here.

Theſe precincts paſt, now hand in hand they came
To the rich fabric of majeſtic frame;
Inſtinct with joy their ſovereign to behold,
The gates of maſſive adamant unfold;
And, as the gently-moving valves uncloſe,
Myſterious muſic from their motion flows;
The airy notes thro' all the palace roam,
And dulcet echoes fill the feſtive dome:

A gorgeous

A gorgeous hall amaz'd SERENA's eyes,
Compar'd to which, in ſplendor, ſtrength, and ſize,
The nobleſt works of which tradition ſings,
Judaic ſhrine, or ſeat of Memphian kings,
Would ſeem more humble than the waxen cell
In which the ſkilful bee is proud to dwell.
Here ſits a power, in whoſe angelic face
Beauty is ſweeten'd by maternal grace;
Her radiant ſeat, ſurpaſſing mortal art,
Supports an emblem of her liberal heart,
A pelican, who rears her callow brood,
And from her vitals ſeems to draw their food.
Around this ſpirit flock a filial hoſt,
Who bleſs her empire, and her guidance boaſt.
Here every ſcience, all the arts attend,
In her they hail their parent and their friend;
Each to her preſence brings the happy few,
Whoſe deareſt glory from her favour grew.
Here, in her ſimple charms, with youthful fire,
Proud to diſplay the magic of her lyre,

Soul-

Soul-ſoothing Harmony preſents her band:
Beſide her Orpheus and Amphion ſtand.
Here, mild Philoſophy, whoſe thoughtful frown
Is ſweetly ſhaded by her olive crown,
(In all her Attic elegance array'd,
Strong to convince, and gentle to perſuade)
To her, whoſe breath inſpir'd his every rule,
Leads the bleſt ſire of the Socratic ſchool.
Each animating bard and moral ſage,
The heaven-taught minds of every clime and age,
Who ſoften'd manners, and refin'd the ſoul,
Flock to this preſence, as to glory's goal;
And, as the mother's heart, that yearns to bleſs
The rival innocents that round her preſs,
Delights to ſee them, as her love they ſhare,
Sport in her ſight, and flouriſh by her care;
Fondly reſponſive to their every call,
Tender of each, and provident for all:
So this ſweet image of celeſtial grace,
Who ſits encircled by her lovely race,

To every ſcience vital ſtrength imparts,
And rears the circle of the ſocial arts;
With ſuch ſolicitude ſhe gives to each,
Pow'rs of ſublimer aim and wider reach.
And now SOPHROSYNE, who near her preſt,
Thus ſpoke her title to her earthly gueſt:—
"Behold the honour'd form, without whoſe aid
My ſtrength muſt vaniſh, and my glory fade!
Source of my being, and my life's ſupport!
EUNOIA call'd in this celeſtial court,
BENEVOLENCE the name ſhe bears on earth,
The guard of weakneſs, and the friend of worth."
She ended: and the mild maternal form
Embrac'd SERENA with a ſmile as warm
As the gay ſpirit Vegetation wears,
When ſhe to crown her favourite nymph prepares,
When, pleas'd her flowery treaſures to diſplay,
She pours them in the lap of youthful May.
But how, SERENA! how may human ſpeech
Thy heavenly raptures in this moment reach?

If

If aught of earthly ſentiment may vie
With the pure joy theſe happy ſcenes ſupply,
'Tis when, unmixt with trouble and with pain,
Love glides in ſecret thro' the glowing vein;
When ſome fond youth, unconſcious of its fire,
Free from chill fear and turbulent deſire,
With every thought abſorb'd in ſoft delight,
Sees all creation in his fair one's ſight,
And feels a bliſsful ſtate without a name,
Repoſe of ſoul with harmony of frame.
So, plung'd in pleaſure of the pureſt kind,
SERENA gaz'd on the maternal mind;
Gaz'd till SOPHROSYNE's directing aid
Thus ſummon'd to new ſights th' obedient maid:—
"Haſte, my fair charge, for of this ample ſtate,
Tracts yet unſeen thy viſitation wait.
The preſſing hours forbid me to unfold
Each ſeparate province which theſe confines hold;
But I will lead thee to that bliſsful crew,
Whoſe kindred ſpirits beſt deſerve thy view."

So

So ſpeaking, her attentive gueſt ſhe led
Thro' ſcenes, that ſtill increaſing wonder bred.
Where'er ſhe trod, thro' all her gorgeous ſeat,
Soft muſic echoed from beneath her feet:
Paſſing a portal, on whoſe lucid ſtone
Emblems of innocence and beauty ſhone,
They reach a lawn with verdant luſtre bright,
And view the bowers of permanent delight.
No fiery ſun here forms a ſcorching noon,
No baleful meteor gleams, no chilling moon:
But, from a latent ſource, one ſoothing light,
Whoſe conſtant rays repel the miſt of night,
Tho' tender, chearful, and tho' warm, ſerene,
Gives laſting beauty to the lovely ſcene.
No ſenſual thought this paradiſe profanes;
For here tried excellence in triumph reigns,
Benignant cares eternal joy ſupply,
And bliſs angelic beams in every eye.
" In yonder groups," the leading ſpirit cried,
" My fav'rite females ſee, my faireſt pride.

The firſt in rank is that diſtinguiſh'd train,
Whoſe ſtrength of ſoul was tried by Hymen's chain:
Tho' beauty bleſt their form, and love, their guide,
Their nuptial band with happieſt omens tied,
Beauty and love, they felt, may loſe the art
To fix inconſtant man's eccentric heart;
Yet, conſcious of their lord's neglected vow,
No virtue frown'd outrageous on their brow,
To keep returning tenderneſs aloof,
By coarſe upbraiding, and deſpis'd reproof:
With ſorrow ſmother'd in attraction's ſmile,
They ſtrove the ſenſe of miſery to beguile;
And, from wild paſſion's perilous abyſs,
Lure the loſt wanderer back to faithful bliſs.
See mild Octavia o'er this band preſide,
Voluptuous Antony's neglected bride,
Whoſe feeling heart, with all a mother's care,
Rear'd the young offspring of a rival fair.
Far other trials rais'd yon lovely crew,
Tho' in connubial ſcenes their merit grew:

It was their chance, ere judgment was mature,
When glittering toys the infant mind allure,
Following their parents' avaricious rule,
To wed, with hopes of bliſs, a wealthy fool.
When time remov'd deluſion's veil by ſtealth,
And ſhow'd the drear vacuity of wealth;
When ſad experience prov'd the bitter fate
Of beauty coupled to a ſenſeleſs mate,
Theſe gentle wives ſtill gloried to ſubmit;
Theſe, tho' invited by alluring wit,
Refus'd in paths of lawleſs joy to range,
Nor murmur'd at the lot they could not change:
But, with a lively ſweetneſs, unoppreſt
By a dull huſband's lamentable jeſt,
Their conſtant rays of gay good-humour ſpread
A guardian glory round their idiot's head.
The next in order are thoſe lovely forms,
Whoſe patience weather'd all paternal ſtorms;
By filial cares, the mind's unfailing teſt,
Well have they earn'd theſe ſeats of bliſsful reſt:

They,

They, unrepining at ſevere reſtraint,
Peeviſh commands, and undeſerv'd complaint;
Bent with unwearied kindneſs to appeaſe
Each fancied want of querulous diſeaſe;
Gave up thoſe joys which youthful hearts engage,
To watch the weakneſs of parental age.

Turn to this chearful band; and mark in this,
Spirits who juſtly claim my realms of bliſs!
Moſt lovely theſe! when judg'd by generous truth,
Tho' beauty is not their's, nor blooming youth:
For theſe are they, who, in life's thorny ſhade,
Repin'd not at the name of ancient maid.
No proud diſdain, no narrowneſs of heart,
Held them from Hymen's tempting rites apart;
But fair diſcretion led them to withdraw
From the priz'd honour of his proffer'd law;
To quit the object of no haſty choice,
In mild ſubmiſſion to a parent's voice;
The valued lover with a ſigh reſign,
And ſacrifice delight at duty's ſhrine.

With ſmiles they bore, from angry ſpleen exempt,
Injurious mockery, and coarſe contempt:
'Twas their's to claſp, each ſelfiſh care above,
A ſiſter's orphans with parental love,
And all her tender offices ſupply,
Tho' bound not by the ſtrong maternal tie:
'Twas their's to bid inteſtine quarrels ceaſe,
And form the cement of domeſtic peace.
No throbbing joy their ſpotleſs boſom fir'd,
Save what benevolence herſelf inſpir'd;
No praiſe they ſought, except that praiſe refin'd,
Which the heart whiſpers to the worthy mind.

Such are theſe gentle tribes, the happy few
Who ſhare the triumph to their victory due:
Angelic aims their ſpotleſs minds employ,
And fill their meaſure of unchequer'd joy.
Behold! where ſome with generous ardour wait
Around yon ſeer, who holds the book of fate;
Thoſe awful leaves with eager glance they turn,
Thence with celeſtial zeal they fondly learn

What

What dangers threaten, thro' the vale of earth,
Their kindred pilgrims, ere they riſe to birth:
To earth they ſtill inviſibly deſcend,
In that dark ſcene congenial minds defend,
From pleaſure's bud drive ſpleen's corroding worm,
And in my votaries' heart my power confirm.

Delights more calm yon liſtening band employ,
Who deeply drink of intellectual joy.
See them around that ſpeaking nymph rejoice,
Their pleaſures varying with her varied voice!
What graces in the ſweet enthuſiaſt glow!
Repeating here whate'er ſhe learns below.
Memory her name, her charge o'er earth to flit,
And cull the faireſt flowers of human wit.
Whatever Genius, in his happieſt hour,
Has penn'd, of moral grace and comic power,
To warm the heart, the ſpells of Spleen unbind,
And pour gay ſunſhine o'er the miſty mind;
Teach men to cheriſh their fraternal tie,
And view kind nature with a filial eye;

This active ſpirit catches in her flight,
Skill'd to retain, and happy to recite.
Here ſhe delivers each bright work, and each
Derives new beauty from her graceful ſpeech.
Warpt by no envy, by no love miſled,
Equal ſhe holds the living and the dead;
Alike rehearſing, as they claim their turn,
The ſong of Anſtey, and the tale of Sterne.
But morning calls thee hence.—Yet one ſcene more,
My foſtering love ſhall lead thee to explore.
This, thy laſt ſight, with careful eyes ſurvey,
And mark th' extenſive nature of my ſway."
Thus with fond zeal the guardian Spirit ſaid,
And to new precincts of her palace led;
The ſcene ſhe enter'd of her richeſt ſtate,
Where on her voice the ſubject paſſions wait:
Here roſe a throne of living gems, ſo bright
No breath could fully their benignant light;
This, her immortal ſeat, the gracious guide
Aſſum'd: her ward ſtood wondering at her ſide.

Swift

Swift as they felt their ruling Power inthron'd,
Ætherial beings, who her empire own'd,
Crowded in glittering pomp the gorgeous ſcene,
To pay their homage to their heavenly queen.
Firſt came chaſte Love, whoſe ſweet harmonious form
Ne'er felt ſuſpicion's ſoul-convulſing ſtorm;
No baleful arrow in his quiver lies,
No blinding veil inwraps his ſparkling eyes;
There all the rays of varied joy unite,
And jointly ſhed unſpeakable delight.
With him was Friendſhip, like a virgin dreſt,
The ſoft aſbeſtos form'd her ſimple veſt,
Whoſe wond'rous folds, in fierceſt flames entire,
Mock the vain ravage of conſuming fire:
Around this robe, a myſtic chain ſhe wore,
Each golden link a ſtar of diamonds bore;
Force could not tear the finiſh'd work apart,
Nor int'reſt looſe it by his ſubtleſt art:
But, ſtrange to tell, if the preſiding Power,
Who to her favourite gave this precious dower,

If kind SOPHROSYNE could fail to breathe
Her vital virtue on this magic wreath,
The parts muſt ſever, faithleſs to their truſt,
The gold grow droſs, and every diamond duſt.
Theſe Valour follow'd, deck'd with verdant palm,
Gracefully bold, majeſtically calm.
A mingled troop ſucceed, with feſtive ſound,
Wiſdom with olive, Wit with feathers crown'd;
Here, hand in hand they move, no longer foes,
Their charms increaſing as their union grows;
Pure ſpirits all, who hating mental ſtrife,
Exalt creation, and embelliſh life;
All here attend, and, in their ſovereign's praiſe,
Their circling forms the ſong of glory raiſe.
The bleſt SERENA drinks, with raviſh'd ear,
The melting muſic of the tuneful ſphere.
Now in its cloſe the ſoothing echoes roll
O'er her rapt fancy, and intrance her ſoul;
Her ſenſes ſink in ſoft oblivion's bands,
Till faithful Jenny at her pillow ſtands,

Recalls

Recalls each mental and corporeal power,
While ſhe proclaims aloud the paſſing hour;
And, in a voice expreſſive of ſurpriſe,
Too ſhrill to ſeem the muſic of the ſkies,
Informs the ſtartled fair 'tis time to riſe.

END OF THE FIFTH CANTO.

CANTO VI.

BLEST be the heart of ſympathetic mould,
Whatever form that gentle heart infold,
Whoſe generous fibres with fond terror ſhake,
When keen affliction threatens to o'ertake
Young artleſs beauty, as alarm'd ſhe ſtrays
Thro' the ſtrange windings of this mortal maze!
To ſuch, SERENA, be thy ſtory known,
Whoſe boſom beſt can make thy lot their own,
And, kindly ſharing in thy trials paſt,
Attend with ſweet anxiety the laſt.

The hour approaches, the tremendous hour,
In whoſe dark moments deeper perils lower;
Still ſo inwrapt in pleaſure's gay diſguiſe,
They lurk inviſible to caution's eyes;
And, unſuſpected by the fair one, wait
To cancel or confirm her bliſsful fate.

Her

Her lively mind with bright ideas ſtor'd,
She takes her ſtation at the breakfaſt-board;
Still her ſoft ſoul the heavenly viſion fills,
And ſweeter graces in her ſmile inſtils;
New hopes of triumph glide thro' every nerve,
And arm her glowing heart with firm reſerve;
Conſcious the final trying chance impends,
To bear its force her every power ſhe bends;
In her quick thought ambitious to preſage
How Spleen's dark agents may exert their rage,
She ponders on what perils may befall,
And fondly deems her mind a match for all.
Ah, lovely nymph! this dangerous pride forego;
Pride may betray—ſecurity's thy foe.

While fancied prudence thus, a foreign gueſt,
Sits doubly cheriſh'd in SERENA's breaſt,
Behold a billet her attention ſteal,
No common arms compoſe its ample ſeal;
Th' unfolding paper breathes a roſeate ſcent,
Sweet harbinger of joy, its kind intent.

Of courteous FILLIGREE it bears the name,
Clear ſymptom of the peer's increaſing flame!
The gracious earl, lamenting pleaſure loſt,
And fair SERENA in her wiſhes croſt,
Has plann'd, in honour of the lovely maid,
A fancied ball, a private maſquerade,
And ſupplicates her ſire, with warm eſteem,
To ſmile indulgent on the feſtive ſcheme.
All arts he uſes to inſure the grant,
Nor leaves unaſk'd the eager maiden aunt.
Quick at the ſound SERENA's glowing heart
Throbs with gay hopes; but ſoon thoſe hopes depart:
Reflection, in her ſoul a faithful guard,
The opening avenues of pleaſure barr'd:
She deem'd the plan of this delightful ſhow,
But the new ambuſh of her ſecret foe;
The bliſs too bright to realize, ſhe gueſs'd,
And chas'd th' idea from her guarded breaſt.
While theſe diſcreet reſolves her thought employ,
Tranquil ſhe triumphs o'er her ſmother'd joy.

Not

Not ſo the knight—to his parental eyes,
In dazzling pomp deluſive viſions riſe:
That coronet, the object of his vow,
He ſees ſuſpended o'er his daughter's brow;
Eager he burns to ſnap the pendent thread,
And fix the glory on his darling's head.
Far wiſer aims the ancient maiden caught,
No empty gew-gaw flutters in her thought;
But, while more keenly ſhe applauds the plan,
Her hope is ſolid and ſubſtantial man;
Not for her infant niece, whoſe baby frame
She holds unfit for Hymen's holy flame;
But for her riper ſelf, whoſe ſtrength may bear
The heavieſt burden of connubial care.
Tho' different phantoms dance before their ſight,
Niece, aunt, and father, in one wiſh unite,
To join the banquet is their common choice,
The buſineſs paſt with no diſſenting voice;
And the warm fire, in whom ambition burn'd,
A note of grateful courteſy return'd:

His

His billet ſeal'd, the glad good-humour'd knight
Launch'd forth, like Neſtor, on his youthful
might:—
" O could I now, in ſpite of age, retain
That active vigour, and that ſprightly vein,
Which led me once the lively laugh to raiſe
Among the merrier wits of former days,
When rival beauties would around me throng,
And gay ridottos liſten to my ſong!
Such were I now, as on the feſtive night,
When Ch——h's charms amaz'd the public ſight;
When the kind fair one, in a veil ſo thin
That the clear gauze was but a lighter ſkin,
Maſk'd like a virgin juſt prepar'd to die,
Gave her plump beauties to each greedy eye!
On that fam'd night (for then with frolic fire
Youth fill'd my heart, and humour ſtrung my lyre),
Pleas'd in the ſunſhine of her ſmile to baſk,
I danc'd around her in a devil's maſk;
And idly chanted an infernal ode,
In praiſe of all this female tempter ſhow'd.

The

The jocund crowd, who throng'd with me to gaze,
Extoll'd my unpremeditated lays,
And Sport, who ſtill of this old revel brags,
* Styl'd her the firſt of maids, and me of wags.
Then a light devil, now, reduc'd to limp,
I am but fit to play the hag-born imp;
Still, not to croſs the frolic of this ball,
Still as the tortoiſe Caliban I'll crawl,
And if with gout my burning ankles flinch,
I'll call it Proſpero's tormenting pinch;
Still in this ſhape I'll ſhow them what I am:
And PEN. ſhall go as Sycorax, my dam."

So ſpoke the knight; and ſpoke with ſo much weight,
The liſtening females ſaw his word was fate;
For ne'er did Jove with ſo reſolv'd a brow
To ſmiling Love his joyous ſcheme avow,

* Θεων Διι, Νεϛορι τ' ανδρων.
See Neſtor's ſpeech in the 11th Iliad.

When

When he concerted, for his ſpecial mirth,
A maſquerading on the ſtage of earth,
And of the ſwan's ſoft plume, or bull's rough hair,
Order'd the fancy-dreſs he choſe to wear.
From whence let ſapient antiquarians ſhow
The ancient uſe of maſquerades below.
SERENA ſmil'd to ſee this joyous fire
Infuſe new youth in her determin'd ſire;
But mute PENELOPE, with half a ſigh,
"With one auſpicious and one dropping eye,"
Heard the firm knight his fixt reſolve impart,
Tickling at once and torturing her heart.
The ball ſhe reliſh'd, but abhorr'd the taſk
To hide her beauties in a beldam's maſk:
Miranda's name would better ſuit her plan,
A ſimple maiden, not afraid of man;
But us'd, alas! her brother's law to feel,
She knows that law admits not of repeal.
Truſting her charms will any garb enrich,
She deigns to take the habit of a witch.

Never

Never did ſorcereſs in the ſhades of night
Try to illuminate a filthy ſprite
With fonder efforts, or with worſe ſucceſs,
Than PEN. now labour'd, in this wayward dreſs,
To give the ſprightly ſhow of living truth
To the poor ghoſt of her departed youth.
As witches o'er their magic cauldron bend,
Anxious to ſee their menial imps aſcend;
So in her glaſs the ancient maiden pries,
And dreams new graces in her perſon riſe.
No ſuch delights, whoſe dear deluſions pleaſe,
The mild SERENA in her mirror ſees;
She, at whoſe toilet beauty's latent queen
Attends, enchanted with her filial mien,
And o'er her favourite's unconſcious face
Breathes her own roſeate glow and vivid grace.
She haſtes her glittering garments to adjuſt,
With all the modeſt charms of ſweet diſtruſt,
Doubting that beauty, which ſhe doubts alone,
Which dazzles every eye except her own.

The

The native diffidence which ſway'd her mind,
Now feels new terrors with its own combin'd;
The robes of Ariel to the nymph recall
Thoſe diſappointments that may yet befall;
As her fair hands the gauze or tiſſue touch,
They fondly warn her not to hope too much.
She feels the friendly counſel they impart,
And caution reigns protector of her heart.

The fateful evening comes—the coach attends,
And firſt the gouty Caliban aſcends;
Then, in deformity's well-ſuited pride,
Sour Sycorax is ſtation'd by his ſide;
And laſt, with ſportive ſmiles, divinely ſweet,
Light Ariel perches on the vacant ſeat.
Fancy now paints the ſcene of pleaſure near,
Yet fluttering gaiety is check'd by fear.
Her wiſh to view the feſtive ſight runs high;
But the fond nymph remembers, with a ſigh,
From hope's keen hand the cup of joy may ſlip,
And fall untaſted, though it reach the lip.

As

As the fine artiſt, whoſe nice toils aſpire
To fame eternal by encauſtic fire;
If he, with grief, has ſeen the faithleſs heat
Mar the rich labour it ſhould make compleat,
When next his hands, with trembling care, confide
To the fierce element his pencil's pride,
Watches unceaſing the pernicious flame,
Terror and hope contending in his frame,
While his fair work the dangerous fire ſuſtains,
Feels it in all his ſympathetic veins,
And at each trivial ſound that chance may cauſe,
Hears the gem crack, and ſees its cruel flaws:
With ſuch ſolicitude the panting maid
Paſt the long ſtreet, of every noiſe afraid.
Now, while around her rival flambeaus flare,
And the coach rattles thro' the crowded ſquare,
She fears ſome dire miſchance muſt yet befall,
Some demon ſnatch her from the promis'd ball;
And dreams no trial more ſevere than this,
So bright ſhe figures the new ſcene of bliſs:

Yet, horrid as it ſeems, her heart is bent
To bear e'en this, and bear it with content.
But, whirl'd at length within the porter's gate,
She thinks what perils at the ball may wait;
And, as ſhe now alights, the fluttering fair
Invokes her guardian to protect her there,
Till thoughts of danger, thoughts of caution, fly
Before the magic blaze that meets her eye.
Th' advancing nymph, at every ſtep ſhe takes,
Pants with amazement, doubtful if ſhe wakes;
Far as her eyes the glittering ſcene command,
'Tis all enchantment, all a fairy land;
No veſtiges of modern pomp appear,
No modern melody ſalutes her ear:
With Mooriſh notes the echoing manſion rings,
And its tranſmuted form to fancy brings
The rich * Alhambra of the Mooriſh kings.
The peer, who keenly thirſts for faſhion's praiſe,
To gild his revel with no common rays,

* See the views of this palace in Swinburn's Travels.

Summon'd

Summon'd his modiſh architect, whoſe ſkill
Can all the wiſhes of caprice fulfil.
His genius, equal to the wildeſt taſk,
Gave to the houſe itſelf a Gothic maſk.
The chaplain, that no gueſt might feel neglect,
As a magician of the Arab ſect,
Wav'd a preſiding wand throughout the ball,
And well provided for the wants of all.

The peer himſelf, his proweſs to evince,
Shines in the ſemblance of a Mooriſh prince;
And round the brilliant mimic hero wait
All pomp and circumſtance of Mooriſh ſtate:
Thro' all his ſplendid dome no eye could find
Aught unembelliſh'd, ſave the maſter's mind.
There, tho' repreſt by courteſy's controul,
Lurks the low mover of the little ſoul,
Mean vanity; whoſe ſlave can never prove
The heart-refining flame of genuine love.
While her cold joys his abject mind amuſe,
His thoughts are buſied on connubial views.

His houſe compleat, its decorations plac'd
By the ſure hand of faſhionable taſte,
He only wants, to crown his modiſh life,
That laſt and fineſt moveable—a wife.
She too muſt prove, to fix his coy deſire,
Such as the eye of faſhion will admire.
His ball is but a jury, to decide
Upon the merit of his fancied bride.
If ſweet SERENA, on this ſignal night,
Shines the firſt idol of the public ſight;
If gallantry's fixt eyes pronounce her fair,
By the ſure ſign of one unceaſing ſtare;
And if, prophetic of her nobler doom,
Each rival beauty ſhudders at her bloom;
The die is caſt—he weds—the point is clear;
She cannot ſlight the vows of ſuch a peer.
Thus argued in his mind the feſtive earl,
And, leſt he lightly chuſe an awkward girl,
Wiſely conven'd, on this important caſe,
Each faſhionable judge of female grace.

Here

Here beaux eſprits in various figures lurk,
Of Jew and Gentile, Bramin, Tartar, Turk;
But of the manly maſks, a youthful bard
Seem'd moſt to challenge beauty's ſoft regard:
Adorn'd with native elegance, he wore,
In ſimpleſt form, the minſtrel dreſs of yore:
They call him EDWIN, who around him throng,
EDWIN, immortaliz'd in Beattie's ſong;
And, ſooth to ſay, within a comely frame,
He bore a heart that anſwer'd to the name;
For this neat habit deck'd a generous youth,
Of gentleſt manners, and ſincereſt truth.
Tho' on his birth propitious fortune ſmil'd,
No proud parental folly ſpoil'd the child;
And genius, more beneficently kind,
Bleſt with ſuperior wealth his manly mind.
Of years he barely counted twenty-one;
But, like a brilliant morn, his opening life begun.
Fain would the muſe on this her votary dwell,
And fully paint the youth ſhe loves ſo well;

His figure's charms, the muſic of his tongue,
What nymphs his lays allur'd, what lays he ſung:
But higher cares her rambling ſong controul;
SERENA's perils ſummon all her ſoul;
For Spleen, ambitious to exert her force,
Conſcious this trial is her laſt reſource,
Moſt keenly bent on her pernicious taſk,
Has ſhifted round the ball from maſk to maſk,
Watching the moment, with infernal care,
To form with deepeſt art her final ſnare,
And manacle the mind of the unguarded fair.

It comes, the moment that muſt fix her lot,
By her, ah thoughtleſs maid! by her forgot;
Tho' the light Hours, e'en in their frolic ring,
Trembling perceive the fearful chance they bring,
And, ſhuddering at the nymph's terrific ſtate,
Seem anxious to ſuſpend her doubtful fate.

Now ſocial eaſe the place of ſport ſupplied,
The hot oppreſſive maſk was thrown aſide,
And beauty ſhone reveal'd in all her bluſhing pride.

Superior

Superior ſtill in features as in form,
With admiration fluſh'd, with pleaſure warm,
The gay SERENA every eye allur'd;
The hearts her figure won her face ſecur'd:
A tender ſweetneſs ſtill the nymph maintain'd,
And modeſty o'er all her graces reign'd.
Well might her ſoul to brilliant hopes incline,
A thouſand youths had call'd her charms divine;
A thouſand friends had whiſper'd in her ear,
That fate had mark'd her for the feſtive peer.
Her youthful fancy, tho' by pomp amus'd,
Wiſh'd not thoſe offers, which her heart refus'd:
That tender heart, by no vain pride poſſeſt,
With indeciſive trembling ſhook her breaſt,
Like a young bird, that, fluttering in the air,
Wiſhes to build her neſt, yet knows not where.

The buſy earl, his puny love to raiſe,
Hunted the circling whiſper of her praiſe;
Heard envy own her lovely charms, tho' loth,
Heard taſte atteſt them with a modiſh oath;

And, nuptial projects thickening in his mind,
Now his fair partner in the dance rejoin'd.
As now the sprightly music paus'd, my lord
Eager resolv'd to touch a softer chord;
Secure of all repulse, he vainly meant
Half to display, half hide his fond intent,
And, in dissembled passion's flowery tropes,
To sport at leisure with the virgin's hopes:
For this he fram'd a motley speech, replete
With amorous compliment and vain conceit.
The labour'd nothing with complacent pride
He spoke; but to his speech no nymph replied:
For in the moment, the lost fair devotes
Her willing ear to more attractive notes.
The minstrel happen'd near the nymph to walk,
Rapt with a bosom-friend in secret talk,
And, at the instant when the earl began
Half to unfold his matrimonial plan,
EDWIN, in whispers, from the crowd retir'd,
Chanc'd to repeat the sonnet she inspir'd:

The

Stothard del. Sharp sculp.

London, Publish'd Sept.r 1.st 1787, by T. Cadell, Strand.

The ſounds, tho' faint, her recollection caught,
Drew her quick eye, and fixt her wondering thought.
Loſt in this ſweet ſurpriſe, ſhe could not hear
A ſingle accent of the amorous peer.
Spleen ſaw the moment that ſhe ſought to gain,
And perch'd triumphant on the noble's brain.
With jealous envy ſtung, and baffled pride,
" Contemptuous girl!" with ſudden rage, he cried,
" If here to happier youths thy views incline,
I want not fairer nymphs who challenge mine.
Thy breaſt in vain with penitence may burn;
But, once neglected, I no more return."
Thus loudly ſpeaking, with diſtemper'd heat,
Rudely he turn'd, with rancorous ſcorn replete.
SERENA, ſtartled at th' injurious ſound,
Survey'd th' inſulting peer, who ſternly frown'd;
Shame and reſentment thro' her boſom ruſh,
Swell every vein, and raiſe the burning bluſh.
Love, new-born love, but in its birth conceal'd,
Nor to the nymph herſelf as yet reveal'd,

And

And juſt diſdain, and anger's honeſt flame,
With complicated power convulſe her frame:
Contending paſſions every thought confound,
And in tumultuous doubt her ſoul is drown'd.
Now treacherous pride, who tempts her tongue to trip,
Forms to a keen reply her quivering lip:
Inſidious Spleen now hovers o'er the fair,
Deems her half lock'd within her hateful ſnare;
In her new ſlave preparing to rejoice,
To taint her ſpirit, and untune her voice.
Hapleſs SERENA! what can ſave thee now?
The fiend's dark ſignet ſtamps thy clouded brow,
In thy ſwoln eye I ſee the ſtarting drop;
This fatal ſhower, ætherial guardian! ſtop:
Haſte to thy votary, haſte, her ſoul ſuſtain,
Nor let the trials ſhe has paſt be vain.
Ah me! while yet I ſpeak, with ſhuddering dread
I hear the magic girdle's burſting thread.
This horrid omen, ye kind powers! avert:
Nor thou, bright zone! thy brighter charge deſert.

Ah,

Ah, fruitleſs prayer! her panting breaſt behold!
See! the gauze ſhakes in many a ruffled fold!
Forc'd from their ſtation by her heaving heart,
From the ſtrain'd girdle thrice three ſpangles ſtart:
Thro' her diſorder'd dreſs a paſs they've found,
And fallen, ſee, they glitter on the ground!—
O bleſſed chance! with life-recalling light
The glittering monitors attract her ſight!
Like ſtars emerging from the darken'd pole,
They ſparkle ſafety to her harraſs'd ſoul.
See! from her brow the clouds of trouble fly,
Vexation's tear is vaniſh'd from her eye!
Her roſy cheeks with joy's ſoft radiance burn,
Like nature ſmiling at the ſun's return;
The nymph, no more with mental darkneſs blind,
Shines the ſweet ruler of her reſcu'd mind.
Hence, hateful Spleen! thy fancied prize reſign,
Renounce for ever what ſhall ne'er be thine;
For, conſcious of her airy guardian's aid,
She feels new ſpirit thro' her heart convey'd,

And,

And, inly bleſſing this victorious hour,
Her ſoul exults in its recover'd power.
In ſuch mild terms ſhe hails th' inſulting peer,
As Spleen, if mortal, muſt expire to hear;
But, driven for ever from the lovely girl,
The foul fiend riots in the captive earl.
He anſwers not; but, with a ſullen air,
On happier EDWIN, who approach'd the fair,
Darts ſuch a glance of rage and envious hate,
As Satan caſt on Eden's bliſsful ſtate,
When on our parents firſt he fixt his ſight,
And undelighted gaz'd on all delight:
So doom'd to look, and doom'd ſuch pangs to feel,
Scornful he turn'd on his elaſtic heel.

" O lovely mildneſs! oh angelic maid!
Deſerving homage, tho' to ſcorn betray'd;
Riſe ſtill, ſweet ſpirit, riſe theſe wrongs above,
Turn from injurious pride to faithful love;

Tho'

Tho' on my brow no coronet may ſhine,
Wealth I can offer at thy beauty's ſhrine,
And, worthier thee, a heart that worſhips thine."
Thus, with new-kindled love's aſpiring flame,
Spoke the fond youth conceal'd by EDWIN's name,
The gallant FALKLAND, rich in inborn worth,
By fortune bleſt, and not of abject birth.
Warmly he ſpoke, with that indignant heat
With which the generous heart ne'er fails to beat,
When worth inſulted wakens virtuous ire,
And injur'd beauty ſets the ſoul on fire.
Quick to his voice the ſtartled virgin turn'd,
With wonder, hope, and joy, her boſom burn'd;
With ſweet confuſion, flurried and amaz'd,
On his attractive form ſhe wildly gaz'd.
Full on her thought the friendly viſions ruſh'd;
Bluſhing ſhe view'd him, view'd him ſtill and bluſh'd;
And, ſoft affection quickening at the ſight,
Perchance had ſwoon'd with fullneſs of delight,

But

But that her father's voice, with quick controul,
Recall'd the functions of her fainting ſoul.
When on the diſtant ſeat, where, fondly fixt,
He view'd the nymph as in the dance ſhe mixt,
He indiſtinctly heard, with wounded ear,
The ſpleenful outrage of the angry peer,
Swift at th' imperfect ſound, with choler wild,
He ſprung to ſuccour his inſulted child;
But ere his fury into language broke,
Love calm'd the ſtorm that arrogance awoke.
The ſudden burſt of FALKLAND's tender flame,
His winning manners, his diſtinguiſh'd name,
His liberal ſoul, by fortune's ſmile careſt,
All join'd to harmonize the father's breaſt.
His fiery thoughts ſubſide in glad ſurpriſe,
And to the generous youth he warmly cries:
"Ingenuous FALKLAND! by thy frankneſs won,
My willing heart would own thee as my ſon;
But on thy hopes SERENA muſt decide:—
Haſte we together from this houſe of pride."

So

So ſpoke the ſire; for, to her votary kind,
SOPHROSYNE inſpir'd his ſoften'd mind.
Speaking, he ſmil'd, to ſee that on his word
The lover hung, and bleſt the ſounds he heard;
That his embarraſs'd child his ſentence caught
With each tumultuous ſign of tender thought;
Whoſe bluſhes, ſpringing from the heart, declare
The dawn of fondneſs in the modeſt fair.
Th' enchanted youth with ecſtaſy convey'd
Forth from the troubled feaſt the trembling maid.

As the keen ſailor, whom his daring ſoul
Has drawn, too vent'rous, near the freezing pole;
Who, having ſlighted caution's tame advice,
Seems wedg'd within impervious worlds of ice;
If, from each chilling form of peril free,
At length he reach the unincumber'd ſea,
With joy ſuperior to his tranſient pain,
Ruſhes, exulting, o'er th' expanſive main:
Such ſtrong delight SERENA'S boſom ſhar'd,
When ſweet reflection to her heart declar'd,

That

That all the trials of her fate were paſt,
And love's deciſive plaudit ſeal'd the laſt.
Her airy guard prepares the ſofteſt down,
From peace's wing, to line the nuptial crown:
Her ſmiles accelerate the bridal morn,
And clear her votary's path from every thorn.
On the quick match the prude's keen cenſures fall,
Blind to the heavenly power who guided all:
But mild SERENA ſcorn'd the prudiſh play,
To wound warm love with frivolous delay;
Nature's chaſte child, not affectation's ſlave,
The heart ſhe meant to give, ſhe frankly gave.
Thro' her glad ſire no gouty humours run,
Jocund he glories in his deſtin'd ſon.
PENELOPE herſelf, no longer ſeen
In the ſour ſemblance of tormenting Spleen,
Buys for her niece the robes of nuptial ſtate,
Nor ſcolds the mercer once thro' all the long debate.
For quick diſpatch, the honeſt man of law
Toils half the night the legal ties to draw;

At

At length th' enraptur'd youth, all forms compleat,
Bears his ſweet bride to his paternal ſeat;
On a fair lawn the chearful manſion ſtood,
And high behind it roſe a circling wood.
As the bleſt lord of this extenſive reign
Led his dear partner thro' her new domain,
With fond ſurpriſe, SERENA ſoon deſcried
A temple rais'd to her ætherial guide.
Its ornaments ſhe view'd with tender awe,
Their faſhion ſuch as ſhe in viſion ſaw;
For the kind youth, her grateful ſmile to gain,
Had, from her clear deſcription, deck'd the fane.
Joyful he cried, to his angelic wife,
"Be this kind power the worſhip of our life!"
He ſpoke; and led her to the inmoſt ſhrine;
Here, link'd in roſy bands, two votaries ſhine;
The pencil had imparted life to each,
With energy that ſeem'd beyond its reach.
Firſt ſtood Connubial Love, a manly youth,
Whoſe bright eye ſpoke the ardent vows of truth;

Friendſhip, ſweet ſmiling, fill'd the ſecond place,
In all the ſofter charms of virgin grace.
Their meeting arms a myſtic tablet raiſe,
Deck'd with theſe lines, the moral of my lays:—
"VIRTUE'S an ingot of Peruvian gold,
SENSE the bright ore Potoſi's mines unfold;
But TEMPER'S image muſt their uſe create,
And give theſe precious metals ſterling weight."

FINIS.

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